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Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Chief Appeals to Somalis To End Fighting

NC3001145396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1345 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Jan (MENA)—The Arab League has expressed regret over the deteriorating security situation in Somalia and the renewed fighting among various Somali groups. Commenting on the current fighting in Somalia, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said today that the actions by the Somali groups are repudiated and do not serve the Arab and international efforts being made to bring about a national reconciliation.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid renewed his appeal to all the rival Somali groups to stop the violence and fighting. He called on them to use words instead of bullets to reach a comprehensive reconciliation. He reasserted that the Arab League is prepared to host a conference for all Somali factions or to arrange for such a conference in any other country on which the Somali factions may agree. He noted that there is currently coordination with UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali regarding the current efforts to return political and security life in Somalia to normal.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 26 Jan

NC3101045596

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 26 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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12. Islamic Alliance Candidate Delegates Released

LABOR PARTY LEADER PAYS TRIBUTE TO MUSLIM BROTHERS MEMBER

In a 600-word article on the front page, Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri pays tribute to the late Muslim Brothers general guide, Muhammad Hamid Abu-al-Nasr, who died recently. Shukri notes his personal relationship with the late Muslim Brothers member and praises his stance on the 1987 People's Assembly elections.

SECURITY COUNCIL SAID TO PASS RESOLUTION AGAINST SUDAN

A 450-word, front page report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah says the Security Council is about to pass a resolution against Sudan. The report begins: "In what is considered to be a serious resolution and part of a plot designed to blockade Sudan and undermine its stability to topple the Islamic regime there, Security Council sources asserted, surprisingly, that the Council will pass a resolution in three days. The resolution, backed by Egypt and the United States, implicitly blames the Sudanese Government for hiding three Egyptian suspects charged with trying to assassinate President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. The resolution asks the Sudanese Government to cooperate and hand over the three terrorists."

The report notes that the expected resolution comes approximately one week after the resolutions passed by the Sudanese opposition conference in Eritrea supported by the West and Israel calling for "speedy military action to overthrow the Sudanese Government."

The report says the Sudanese delegate at the United Nations "criticized" Egypt's role in the move against Sudan at the Security Council.

EGYPT TO EXPORT NATURAL GAS TO ISRAEL

A 750-word report on the front page by Mahmud Bakri says that Egyptian-Israeli contacts are now under way to agree on detailed plans to export Egyptian gas to Israel "under the accords signed by the two sides in this regard."

The report says the Israeli prime minister and other senior Israeli politicians believe such an agreement must be reached with Egypt, because the gas-exporting accord "will be a prelude to numerous Egyptian-Israeli economic projects."

COURT OVERRULES BAN ON TRAVEL OF BROTHERS DEPUTY GUIDE

A 65-word front page report by Dawud Hasan says the Administrative Judiciary Court in its session "last Tuesday" ruled as unconstitutional the interior minister's decision banning Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the Muslim Brothers deputy general guide and official spokesman, from traveling abroad.

In its verdict, the court "asserted" that the Constitution establishes citizens' rights to travel abroad and move freely. The court also "asserted" that the Interior Ministry's reasons for the ban are "insufficient." Security is not being compromised."

APPEAL FOR SIGNATURES TO ANNUL PARLIAMENT REPRINTED

A 150-word appeal by opposition parties to collect 1 million signatures to "bring down the People's Assembly" reappears on the front page.

STUDY SAYS MILITARY COURT RULINGS VIOLATE ISLAMIC SHARI'AH

Page 2 carries a 1,600-word installment of "a study" republished to mark the death sentences passed against six people in a case known as the "Returnees From Sudan." The introduction says: "This is an attempt to halt the illegal execution of these citizens." "We know the president of the Republic does not care about this talk, otherwise he would have heeded this study when it was first published in July 1993."

The study discusses the military court rulings from a religious perspective. It claims the verdicts were based on the notion that acts perpetrated by Islamic extremist groups fall within the category of political, not social crimes.

The author of the study, Majdi Ahmad Husayn, AL-SHA'B's chief editor, asks the president if he read the verdicts he ratified and says he is willing to participate in a debate with the mufti, the al-Azhar shaykh, or any other scholars to prove his point. He concludes that the rulings violate Islamic shari'ah.

REPORT ON TORTURE OF ISLAMIC TREND DETAINEES

A 670-word, unattributed report on page 2 of AL-SHA'B deals with "advanced methods of torture implemented in Egyptian jails." The report says prisons have become places of oppression to demoralize detainees. It says the detainees are not charged in specific cases and are there unconvicted. They are accused by the investigating authorities of belonging to the Islamic trend, mainly the Vanguards of Conquest or the Islamic Group, it continues.

The report says that after their arrest, the detainees are subjected to "brutal torture" to make them confess to belonging to these two groups. It adds that the detainees are beaten with electric cables and whips, sometimes stripped, and forced to call themselves female names. The report also says the detainees are being served with little food and that medicine and medical care is lacking. It adds that some detainees have been beaten to death.

YEMENI PARLIAMENT SPEAKER CITED ON DISPUTE WITH ERITREA

Page 4 runs an approximately 900-word interview with Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni House of Representatives and leader of the Yemeni Reform Grouping, by an unidentified correspondent. The Yemeni official discusses the dispute with Eritrea, differences between the Reform Grouping [RG] and the General People's Congress [GPC], reports on early elections, unity between the south and north, economic policy, Yemeni-Saudi ties, and democracy.

He says the Eritrean "aggression" is unjustified and everyone knows this. He adds that mediation efforts, the latest of which was French mediation, are continuing and that "the whole issue is in the hands of President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih." He goes on to say that the House of Representatives discussed "every aspect of the issue," called up the ministers concerned to debate it with them, and passed a resolution containing recommendations and directives for the government.

Asked whether Israel was behind the Eritrean move, he replies that there must be foreign motives and encouragement for the Eritrean president to commit such an act. "The Eritrean president cannot embark on such an adventure without a push and encouragement by major foreign powers," he adds.

Asked if Yemen rules out a military solution as a final option, he says: "President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's first statement when the crisis broke out was that the island must be regained by one of two options, peacefully or by war, and this is the view and decision of the people." Asked about the Arab stance on the crisis, he says that from the media point of view the Arab stance has been good and he praises a resolution passed by the Amman Arab-African parliamentary conference "asserting Yemen's right to that island."

Asked about disputes between the RG and the GPC, he admits that there is disagreement between them over a fiscal and economic reform plan presented by the World Bank and the IMF and over the 1996 general budget. He remarks that all these differences stem from the need to ensure the "country's higher interest" and asks: "But where does this interest lie?" He suggests that these differences are not cause for concern and that such differences occur in most countries. Answering another question, he says early elections are out of the question; they will be held on the due date in April 1997. He says the Yemeni people throughout the country are united after "legitimacy's victory over the treacherous separatists." He also says that the coalition government is devising a five-year plan beginning in 1996 focusing on agriculture and other development spheres.

Asked about ties with Saudi Arabia, he says Yemen and Saudi Arabia have signed a memorandum of understanding containing "all practical solutions to end border and other problems." He says joint committees have been formed and ties have returned to their previous normal and good standing.

MUSLIM INTELLECTUALS DISCUSS WAYS TO CONFRONT ZIONISM

Page 4 also features an approximately 840-word report headlined "Egypt's Scholars and Intellectuals Call For Forming a National Committee to Confront the Zionist War" filed by Yusuf Sa'd.

The report cites remarks made by various intellectuals and Muslim scholars in the "Opera House last Wednesday." Dr. Mustafa Mahmud, a renowned Muslim intellectual, discusses "the Zionist infiltration of the region and Egypt and Zionist methods of subversion." He proposes the formation of "a nongovernmental Egyptian national committee comprising all nationalist forces of various ideologies and inclinations." He suggests that such a committee should convene regularly to discuss "the serious dangers posed by the Zionist entity and to make everyone aware of the Zionist enemy and his destructive methods, including espionage, drugs, disease, and other filthy and destructive means."

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali says: "We have disagreements but we must cooperate on what we agree upon and excuse each other for the points of disagreement." He adds that "we would allow" the 15 million Jews to live on Islamic land under a fair principle of equality. But, he continues, what "we" do not accept is for the Jews to come and say we are God's chosen people and must rule the region. He says: "We tell every Christian in Egypt: Let us stand up to their schemes against us. We agree that the Christians and Jews should keep their religions and we want them to stick to that position. We want to be a united body, as Dr. Mustafa Mahmud advocates."

"Islamic scholar" Fahmi Huwaydi says: "We need to be nationalists, not Islamists and secularists. This is the gist of Dr. Mahmud's idea. He wants all of us to be united without excluding the Islamists, because the future requires addition, not subtraction arithmetic."

COMMENT ON REMOVAL OF PREACHERS FROM MOSQUES

A 250-word comment by the editor on page 6 discusses Friday sermons and the "removal of numerous imams."

The comment says: "The Friday sermon lost its charm and effective impact in many mosques after numerous imams known for their knowledge and piety were removed." It adds that in recent years "the Islamic preaching arena" has been emptied of prominent ulema for no reason other than that they "told the truth and turned their mosques into centers attracting large sectors of worshippers."

WRITER NOTES U.S. CONGRESS STANCE ON ISLAMISTS

In an approximately 1,100-word article on page 9, the writer, Muhammad Ibrahim Matruk, criticizes politicians' attitude and behavior, saying a politician must ask what role is "demanded of us as Islamists."

He says the U.S. Congress "is participating in the game of democracy" by linking aid to the Egyptian Government with "its anger" over the forged elections. The writer adds that Congress will quickly realize the government's view, expressing its capabilities to "finalize the real goals of the Congress—to remove the Islamists at any cost."

Toward the end of the article, he asks: "As Islamists hungry for the truth and justice, should we withdraw? Do the volcanoes burning inside us have no option, but to explode?"

ISLAMIC ALLIANCE CANDIDATE DELEGATES RELEASED

A 120-word, unattributed report on page 11 says the authorities in Bani Suwayf have freed "over 100" delegates of the Islamic alliance candidates. The report adds that the State detective agencies arrested them and kept them in custody for 23 days in various locations in Bani Suwayf without charge.

Palestinian Affairs

'Abd-al-Shafi Spells Out Position on Palestinian Charter Amendment

JN3001143596 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 30 Jan 96 p 30

[Report by Mazin Sa'adah in Ramallah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and head of the Palestinian delegation to the Washington talks, asserted that he will not turn down the post of the council speaker if he is nominated to the post by council members. But he will not accept any ministerial post if he is offered that, he added. He noted: "I do not have the ambition to become a minister."

With regard to the issue of amending the Palestinian National Charter in compliance with the Oslo B accord signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides in Washington on 28 September, 'Abd-al-Shafi affirmed that the endorsement of amendments must be contingent on the Israeli side recognizing the Palestinian people's rights. He added: Regardless of what Israel says or does, I do not think that we should remain the party that offers successive concessions, particularly since Israel has not thus far recognized our rights to self-determination and independent statehood.

'Abd-al-Shafi continued: Why should we continue to make the concessions demanded by Israel at a time when it maintains an intransigent position opposed to our basic rights? Given all this, I believe that an amendment of the charter must be preceded by an official and public Israeli recognition of the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination, independent statehood with Jerusalem as the capital, and an appropriate handling of the refugee issue in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

'Abd-al-Shafi said: If Israel fails to do so, I will reject any amendments to the charter. But if it meets the requirements of fairness and peace, and recognizes the Palestinian people's rights, I will not object to an amendment of the charter.

With regard to the prerogatives of the council, which is expected to convene after the 'Id al-Fitr holidays, 'Abd-al-Shafi said that the elected Palestinian Council will have the right to legislate in all areas with the exception of security and foreign relations. To streamline the relationship between the elected council and the Palestinian Authority council which 'Arafat will form, a basic law will be drafted when the legislative council convenes. This law will seek to streamline the work of various agencies of the Palestinian Authority, the judiciary, and the legislative council itself.

Fatah Aide: Dropping Palestinian National Charter Not Likely

MM3001154296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 30 Jan 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Official in Charge of Organization in Fatah Says: Abolition of Palestinian National Charter out of the Question Now"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Fatah Central Committee member Muhammad Ghunaym has stressed that the elected Palestinian Council has no powers to draw up a new constitution for the Palestinian National Authority [PNA]. He said: "It is more of a transitional administrative, rather than legislative, council whose task is to watch and run the PNA's daily work. It has no powers to legislate except within the spheres of authority assigned to it."

Ghunaym (Abu-Mahir), who is in charge of mobilization and organization in Fatah, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that what has been reported about abolishing and replacing the National Charter is out of the question at present. He pointed out that the national charter talks about Palestine and the Palestinian people, while the constitution — when it is drawn up — will talk about the area under Palestinian control or the area it [the PNA] is dreaming of annexing [ilhaqiha] to it. Abu-Mahir added that the talk now about an alternative constitution to the National Charter does not correspond to the scale of what has been achieved for the Palestinian people under the Oslo agreement.

Abu-Mahir said that if the National Charter is amended it would mean the abolition of the PLO, the authority to which the PNA refer and the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Abu-Mahir described the stage through which the Palestinian people are passing as serious and very delicate in view of the challenges it involves. He said that amending the Palestinian National Charter would put the Palestinian cause within the Oslo boundaries, rather than the boundaries of Security Council Resolution 242, hence recognizing the declaration of principles as the maximum for the Palestinian people's aspirations.

PLO's 'Abbas on U.S. Position on Jerusalem, Other Issues

JN3001193296 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 24 Jan 96 pp 1, 29

[Report by Walid al-'Abbasi]

[FBIS Translated Text] PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, emphasized the importance of the joint committee between the

United Arab Emirates [UAE] and Palestine. He said the formation of this committee signifies the firm support of His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, UAE president. He also hailed his highness' continuous support for the Palestine question and the Palestinian people. He said the UAE-Palestinian committee will convene soon.

Abu-Mazin said he supports the U.S. Administration's position on Jerusalem as expressed in the official memorandum presented to the PLO before the Madrid peace conference. According to the Palestinian official, this position says that Jerusalem should not be redivided, should not be annexed to Israel, and its features should not be changed.

Abu-Mazin went on explaining the U.S. position on several issues such as settlements, which the Americans described as obstacle to peace. He said after giving Israel $10 billion in loan guarantees, the Americans said they are against settlement construction in the West Bank and Jerusalem. According to the U.S. position, the problem of the refugees should be resolved through negotiations and compensation should be offered to those who do not want to return.

These statements by Abu-Mazin, architect of the Oslo agreement, were made at a news conference held at Abu Dhabi Intercontinental Hotel on 22 January.

On the joint UAE-Palestinian committee, the Palestinian leader said that members of this committee are currently being named. He added that Shaykh Zayid is enthusiastic about this committee. The committee's first sessions will be held soon.

On the Palestinian fighters in southern Lebanon, he said they have two options: They can either return to the Palestinian state after the final solution, God willing, or return [as published] as ordinary citizens to the country in which they live.

He said that serious discussions on a safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip are under way. He said that no negative development has taken place after Rabin's killing and that the Israelis were committed to the timetable of withdrawals from the West Bank.

Answering a question from AL-ITTIHAD, he said the Palestinian Authority does not have any political prisoners, but at the same time, the Authority does not allow the presence of two authorities and the carrying of weapons, and this applies to Fatah before any other party.

He said that Fatah Movement has the right to transform itself into a party, and that the other forces have the right to form parties that speak in their names. He expressed belief that the Palestinian state which may be established within three years will be a secular, pluralistic, and democratic state that respects religions.

On those who carry Palestinian laissez-passers, he said this subject is currently being considered.

He said a speaker for the Legislative Council will be elected, and a council of ministers will be formed, of which 20 percent of its members will be Legislative Council members and 80 percent will be from outside the council.

On the elections, Abu-Mazin said: The Legislative Council has powers related to the work of the Palestinian National Authority. He said the Palestine National Council [PNC] represents the Palestinian people, and the Legislative Council is part of the PNC which renounced terrorism and violence and accepted peaceful means for solving the Palestine question. The charter will be amended on this basis when the PNC is convened and when it is time for declaring this amendment.

As for the borders of the Palestinian state, he said the state will comprise the territories occupied in June 1967. Abu-Mazin said the borders, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem are the most difficult issues facing the negotiations on the final status which will begin on 4 May.

He said confederation with Jordan is a democratic option that is realized according to the free will of the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples. He said the Americans did not speak about a state and they said that they would not speak about issues that are not yet ready to be discussed.

Abu-Mazin then spoke about the elections, which he personally supervised along with the head of the international monitoring team which included 650 observers. He also spoke about what happened at the post offices in Jerusalem and in Hebron.

Finally, he said he was happy about the results of the elections. He also said that with the end of the tenure of the Legislative Council, the Palestinian state will materialize. He hoped that this council will be the one that proclaims the Palestinian state.

Palestinian Officials Confirm Israeli 'Violations' in Southern Gaza

JN3001204996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] High-ranking Palestinian officials have expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the Israeli violations in the al-Mawasi area in southern Gaza. Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, member of the PLO Executive Committee; Hasan 'Asfur, director of the Negotiations Affairs Department; and Colonel Muhammad Dahlan, preventive security chief and member of the negotiating team, toured the al-Mawasi area and the bypass routes leading to the Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip. They inspected the Israeli violations there.

Hasan 'Asfur stated that the visit came in the wake of complaints by Palestinian citizens there about the Israeli violations, especially the closure of bypass routes, something which obstructs citizens' activities. He indicated that those violations have been confirmed. The Palestinian official said the Israeli measures are a violation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. 'Asfur said that the Israeli side will be informed of those violations. He said that the Palestinian side will follow up the Israeli violations in the al-Mawasi area to bring an end to them and to maintain citizens' interests.

54 National Security Forces' Members Return From Libya

JN3001165096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] Fifty four members of the National Security Forces returned to the Gaza Strip from Libya via the Rafah crossing this afternoon. The forces, who entered Rafah wearing their military uniforms and carrying their belongings, were accorded a popular reception.

The returning members of the National Security Forces said they are happy to return to their homeland following a forced absence of some three decades. They said all Palestinians should be allowed to return, and stressed they will serve the homeland and participate in the construction process to establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as the capital.

Major General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Majayidah, commander of the National Security Forces, said that arrangements are being made at the Rafah crossing to secure the return of the remaining members of the 285-strong group of National Security Forces from Libya. Al-Majayidah said that those who complete the formalities required at the crossing immediately leave for the Gaza Strip.

Maj. Gen. al-Majayidah said that other groups of National Security Forces in Iraq, Tunisia, and Jordan will return to the homeland later.

Most Hamas Members Said Willing To Call Off Armed Struggle

TA3001164496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ghazi Hamad, a prominent Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader in Gaza, says that most members of his organization are prepared to call off the armed struggle against Israel and revert to political activity.

Hamad said that Hamas has been having trouble acting since the signing of the Oslo agreement, and that is why it has been looking for new ways to act, ways that are not violent. Nevertheless, he said, Hamas may switch back to an armed struggle in the future.

DFLP Leader on Return to Territories, Attacks Against IDF Soldiers

TA3101105296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Taysir Khalid, Nayif Hawatimah's deputy and a member of the PLO Executive Committee, says his organization has not stopped the attacks against IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers. In his first interview with Qol Yisra'el, Khalid divulges that the leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] — George Habash's organization — have decided to return to the territories. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem spoke with him:

[Begin Ben-Menahem recording] Taysir Khalid, Nayif Hawatimah's deputy and member of the PLO Executive Committee, yesterday agreed to grant his first interview to Qol Yisra'el. In a phone conversation from Amman, he says the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] leadership in Damascus is preparing to coordinate the return arrangements that will allow it to come back to the territories — this, after Israel and the Palestinian Authority lifted the veto on their return. He also says that the PFLP leadership, headed by George Habash, has decided to return to the territories. Khalid explained that this decision was made in a session of the PFLP political bureau. I asked him about the DFLP's position regarding terror attacks, and whether it has stopped the armed struggle against Israel. [passage omitted]

Khalid told me that the DFLP is against attacking civilians. As far as soldiers are concerned, however, the occupation must end. He said that international covenants grant the DFLP a right to oppose the occupation, especially as the IDF soldiers are continuing to kill Palestinian civilians. Khalid said the IDF redeployment is only serving as a camouflage for continuing the occupation.

Referring to Syria, Khalid said it will not intervene in the DFLP leadership's decision to return to the territories. He said the organization makes its decisions independently, noting that it has already had differences of opinion with Syria. [end recording]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Hamas, Israeli Government Reportedly in 'Secret' Talks

MM3001123796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 30 Jan 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Salih Qallab, 'Ali al-Salih, and Mahmud Abu-'Id: "Secret Contacts Between Hamas and Israel via Rabbis"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Jerusalem — Informed sources have revealed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that recent weeks have witnessed secret contacts — of a preliminary nature — between the Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas] and the Israeli Government via some Arab intermediaries.

The sources said that Shim'on Peres informed Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat of these contacts, and the stage they have reached, at the latest meeting between the two sides at the Erez crossing point at the northern entrance to the Gaza Strip last week.

The sources stressed that the Palestinian president invited two Hamas leaders, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar and Shaykh al-Sham'ah, to a meeting with him in the Palestinian National Authority's headquarters in Gaza last Friday [26 January], that he discussed with them the issue of the contacts with Israel and the nature of Hamas' demands, and that he agreed with them that they would continue these contacts and brief him on all developments in these contacts regularly.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that two Palestinian journalists based in occupied Jerusalem arranged telephone contacts between three senior Hamas leaders — Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, Shaykh Jamil Hamami, and Shaykh Talal Sidr — and a number of Israeli rabbis, and that these telephone contacts resulted in an agreement to hold official negotiations between the Israeli Government and Hamas.

Shaykh Jamil Hamami has confirmed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the telephone contacts did take place. He said that "Rabbi Moche Froman contacted some Hamas officials to conduct a religious, not political, dialogue with them." He added that "this communication was not official in any way. We did not discuss with Froman any ways of holding a dialogue between Hamas and the Israeli Government, because we are not authorized to conduct such a dialogue."

Hamami pointed out that he stressed to Froman that the movement's arena cannot tolerate such a dialogue at present, that the required thing is to generate convictions [tawlid qana'at] before engaging in a political dialogue, and that the present time does not serve such an orientation.

At the same level, Hamami denied that the telephone contacts broached the issue of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, founder of Hamas, who is sentenced to life imprisonment and is currently in jail.

Palestinian sources have stressed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that President 'Arafat raised the issue of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's release during his meeting with Peres, and that the latter promised to do his best as regards Shaykh Yasin's release.

At another level, Rabbi Ibrahim al-Hamra, rabbi of the Syrian Jews who emigrated to Israel last year, has called for clerics to be included in the ongoing negotiations between the Arabs and Israel.

Al-Hamra told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT from his house in Gulun [as transliterated], south of Tel Aviv, that there are serious attempts to include clerics in these negotiations. Asked whether he supports or opposes the idea of dialogue with Hamas, he told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "I am not against any dialogue that brings views closer and helps to secure a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem." He added: "I am for anything that helps to serve love and peace."

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT's sources stressed that Shim'on Peres expressed enthusiasm for such a dialogue when he was informed of it by the Israeli rabbis who made telephone contacts with Hamas leaders inside through arrangements made by the two Arab journalists mentioned earlier. And in order to avert any obstacles, he raised the issue with the Palestinian president and asked him to continue with it right to the end. It is worth mentioning that there is information that the Americans have had knowledge of the contacts between Hamas and the Israelis since they started. And that a senior U.S. official met with a senior Hamas leader in Austria last November, urging him to abandon the previous confrontation methods and to initiate a serious dialogue with the Israeli Government.

No Progress Seen in Wye Talks on Security Arrangements

TA3101064696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Another round of Israeli-Syrian talks ends in Maryland today. Yesterday, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited the delegations, and the controversial issues, as well as those on which there is agreement, were raised during a joint session. Our correspondent Hayim Zissowitz reports from Washington:

[Begin Zissowitz recording] The points dealt with during Secretary of State Christopher's visit to the Wye Plantation are the same points he will raise during his talks in Jerusalem and Damascus next week. It has been learned that wide gaps remain between Israel and Syria on the security arrangements issue — for example, on the issue of the early warning stations that Israel is demanding to be posted on the Golan Heights after the withdrawal, and on the depth of withdrawal and the deployment of forces. The delegations have not reached an agreement on all these issues.

The security arrangements were the main issue raised this week. The issue of normalization and the nature of peace was mainly dealt with last week within the framework of the jurists team. This week, the jurists have not held separate sessions.

A source close to the talks says that the Syrians have shown a positive attitude and a willingness to discuss certain aspects of normalization, as Israel has suggested.

Most of the issues that Christopher will deal with next week involve the security arrangements. Today the talks end, and it has still not been determined whether they will be resumed, and if so in what format. This issue will apparently be determined during Christopher's visit next week.

Despite the efforts to dissociate the talks from the issue of early elections in Israel, this matter was raised in the talks and may impact their future format. It is assessed that the talks will continue in any event and that during the next round, economic and water experts from both sides may join them. It is assessed that a joint statement will not be issued today at the end of the present round of talks. Perhaps there will be an American statement on behalf of all sides. [end recording]

Arab-Israeli Regional Economic Planning Talks Held in Holland

TA3101125396 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 31 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Arye Dayan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority [PA] have decided to set up a joint team of economic planning experts that will draft a plan for joint panregional economic planning. The decision was made at a quadripartite ministerial meeting held yesterday in The Hague. The meeting was attended by Minister Yosi Beilin, Jordanian Planning Minister Rima Khalaf al-Hunaydi, Egyptian Economy Minister Nawwal al-Tatawi [name as transliterated], and the PA official in charge of planning and international cooperation, Nabil Sha'th.

This was the third in a series of meetings the four planning ministers have held. The first encounter took place about six months ago, when Beilin was still economics and planning minister. In that meeting, the four ministers discussed the possibility of strategic regional planning through coordination and cooperation. They met again at the October 1995 regional conference in Amman. The Amman meeting was also attended by representatives of the Dutch Government, which decided to sponsor the planning ministers forum and to host their future meetings.

Sources close to Minister Beilin said that acting within the framework they dubbed "The Hague Track," the four ministers decided to establish a network of top academic planning experts from around the world and of professional experts from government sectors of Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the PA. Each of the four member countries will be represented by six to 10 experts who will attempt, in the course of the coming six months, to define each member's relative advantages in a bid to draft the guidelines for joint economic planning.

The teams will be formed in the next few weeks by each of the four ministers, in collaboration with Dutch experts and Harvard University professors. The Israeli delegation at the meeting in The Hague was attended by Alon Li'el, director general of the Economics and Planning Ministry, and Beilin's advisers Robby Natanson and Aviv Shir-On, in addition to Minister Beilin.

Algeria

Bomb Experts Killed Dismantling 'Booby-Trapped' Car

LD3001194496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A statement by the security services said that huge sacrifices have today been offered by two elements from the security forces. The matter concerns Cheikh Abdelkrim, a specialist in defusing explosive devices and booby-traps, who died this morning with his assistant at El Mardja district in Baraki, east of Algiers, when they started dismantling a booby-trapped car. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Egyptian Minister al-Sharif Returns From Saudi Arabia, Comments

NC3101102696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0920 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Jan (MENA)—Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif returned to Cairo from Saudi Arabia this morning after a three-day visit.

During the visit he conveyed two messages from President Husni Mubarak to the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

Upon his return, al-Sharif said he was carrying a reply to President Husni Mubarak from Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. He noted that President Mubarak wants to hold consultations with Arab leaders, especially the Saudis.

Al-Sharif said that during his stay he discussed several topics concerning common issues and continuing bilateral cooperation. He added that President Husni Mubarak and the Saudi crown prince want to enhance and consolidate bilateral relations and joint cooperation in every sphere.

He said he met Saudi Information Minister Dr. Fu'ad al-Farisi and discussed with him the need to devise a timetable for cooperation in media and handling common challenges. He added that he will meet the Saudi minister of information on 25 February to pursue these issues.

Al-Sharif said he met intellectuals, Saudi newspaper chief editors, and university professors and discussed with them the challenges facing the Arab nation, statements on the Middle East market, and the Arab world's philosophy on the issue.

Egypt Exports $1.2 Million Worth of Light Bulbs to Iraq

NC3001162296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1448 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Jan (MENA)—Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Sa'd Qasim al-Masri has stated that the UN sanctions committee agreed that Egypt export a shipment of electric bulbs to Iraq as an exception to the embargo and sanctions imposed on Iraq. He said that the value of this deal totals $1.2 million. It should be recalled that earlier Egypt sent Iraq medicines and foodstuffs with the approval of the sanctions committee.

Muslim Brotherhood's Mashhur Calls For Dialogue With Government

NC3001170296 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 24 Jan 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, AL-SAFIR—Muslim Brotherhood [MB] General Guide Mustafa Mashhur has stated that he hopes that the government will suspend the campaigns of repression and trials against the Muslim Brothers and start a dialogue with them. Such a dialogue, he added, would enable the government to listen to another opinion and ascertain that power "was not and will not be a target of the Muslim Brothers, who only care about implementing God's law and the rule by the Islamic shari'ah."

In his first press remarks to AL-SAFIR, Mashhur said that "Islam is the optimum and only solution, and the people have to trust this and realize that most of their problems result from resorting to man-made laws and systems and staying away from religion."

Asked about reports a few weeks ago that he had unseated former guide Hamid Abu-al-Nasr after becoming very sick, Mashur said: "These reports are groundless rumors. Hamid Abu-al-Nasr remained a guide until his death." Mashhur added: "Before his death, Abu-al-Nasr recommended that I become the general guide of the Brotherhood, and such a recommendation is common in Islam. Caliph Abu-Bakr, on his death bed, recommended that 'Umar Bin-al-Khattab be chosen after him."

Asked why the MB's bylaws do not include the principle of recommendation when choosing a guide, Mashhur said that the "Brothers follow the tradition of the pious salaf [early Muslims] and the teachings of Islam."

Regarding the speed with which the guide's name has been announced and whether this was an attempt to avoid any differences or splits, Mashhur said: "The speed has an origin in Islam, when the prophet's companions met in the shed of Bani Sa'idah [tribe] to agree on a caliph while the prophet's body was still not buried. As for fear of splits, it is just a rumor because the Brothers have nothing to compete about. The position of a guide is an organizational position that offers no benefits."

Mashhur denied the existence of hawks and doves among the Brothers. He stressed that "the mission of everybody is to call for God with wisdom and good counseling. The special operations division set up within the group, which is known as the Special Order, was meant to resist the British and the Zionists and not the regime. The Special Order played its role in Palestine and at the Suez Canal area. Were it not for the collusion of the Arab rulers with the world enemies, the declaration of a truce, and the [Palestine] partition plan, things would have been different." He added: "The British, U.S., and French ambassadors at the time asked Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi to dissolve the Brotherhood, and he agreed to their request on 8 December 1948. The Brothers were arrested, except for Hasan al-Banna, whom they [not further specified] targeted and killed. But today there is no justification for the existence of a Special Order. The Brothers are committed to the law and the Constitution, and this is the duty of every Muslim who preaches for God."

Asked about his opinion of al-Wasat party and if the idea to establish a party for the Brotherhood reflects difference in views on partisan democracy, Mashhur said that "the fact that some members of the group, acting on a personal initiative, are seeking to establish a party does not mean that this party belongs to the MB. It also does not mean the existence of differences over the party-system or the role of parties in political life. The idea of establishing a Brotherhood party was and remains on the table as far as members are concerned. We have agreed on specific conditions and rules that must be made available first before initiating the establishment of a political party for the MB. Among these conditions is unleashing the freedom to establish parties and canceling the Parties' Affairs Committee of the Consultative Council. This committee, which acts as an adversary since it is an authoritative committee affiliated to the ruling National Democratic Party, at the same time serves as an arbiter. It gives itself the power of approving or rejecting the establishment of any party. The third condition is to see practical measures by the regime proving that it accepts the principle of the circulation of power."

Mashhur denied that the Brothers are taking a hostile stance against any Egyptian parties or political forces. He added: "We agree on many issues. As for the difference in principles, it is natural."

Asked about the security agencies' expectations that his election as a guide will signal a return to violence by the Brothers, Mashhur said: "This is their viewpoint, and they are free to believe it, but it is not the truth. We are certain that the future is for Islam. Things are proceeding in our favor, not only at the Arab level, but at the international level as well. There is an Islamic awakening in many countries. We believe, even urge our youths to renounce violence."

Libya

Yemeni President Salih Telephones al-Qadhdhafi

LD3101003996 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 0015 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih telephoned the brother leader of the revolution, during which the Yemeni president informed him of the current situation in the region.

Libyan Editor Cites VOA Broadcast on Tunis, Israel Accord

LD3001155096 Tripoli JANA in English 1426 GMT 30 Jan 96

["JANA Arab Affairs editor comments on a broadcast by the CIA radio Voice of America"—JANA headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, Jan 30, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — The CIA's radio known as the Voice of America, devoted last night's comments, which expresses the policy of the American Government to comment on the agreement between Tunisia and the Israeli enemy to set up interest offices in the Tunisian capital and in Tel al Rabia [Tel Aviv].

The radio said that this means that each state will have representatives in the other state to facilitate what he called political consultations, travel and trade. The radio also quoted the American secretary of state as saying that this step is almost what we have requested for a long time.

The radio attributed to the Tunisian foreign minister, Al Habib Ben Yahya a statement indicating that this step reveals Tunisia's readiness to consolidate its relations with the Israelis.

JANA's Arab Affairs editor commented on the reports of the Voice of America in this respect and said that America has exposed itself and revealed the role it is playing towards the infiltration of the Israeli enemy in the Arab homeland, considering that what had been reported by the radio expresses the point of view of the American Government and it is in line with the wishes of America and its position, which is total support for the Israelis first and foremost.

The editor added that the most eloquent expression of the American suspected role is America's attempt to justify the step which Tunisia and the Israeli enemy are now linked politically and touristically.

The editor pondered at the question marks included in most paragraphs of the comment by the organ of the government to conclude that that proves that American did not realise count on this step ever taking place [sentence as received].

JANA's Arab Affairs editor concluded his comment by saying that the above-mentioned radio did not conclude its comment here but it focused on highlighting that Tunisia is more readily available for agreement on this step in a way which is full of hidden agendas which proves that America is always behind what inflicts damage on the Arab nation and that is the major reason for all evils which will inflict damage on the fatal causes of the Arab nation.

Tripoli on U.S. Spokesman's Comments on Farrakhan Visit

LD2901223396 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An official source at the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation has commented on the statements given by the official spokesperson of the U.S. White House on 26 January, regarding the results of the recent visit to the Great Jamahiriyah of Louis Farrakhan, the U.S. Nation of Islam leader. He has said: The U.S. Administration has become used to attacking the Great Jamahiriyah indiscriminately. As for the visit to the Great Jamahiriyah by brother Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, the U.S. allegation of the allocation of $1 billion is a cause for astonishment and derision. This is incompatible with reality, because the Nation of Islam can be supported with what is more important than money and weapons. The Great Jamahiriyah's standing by the oppressed and its adoption [as heard] of the downtrodden minorities stem from the principles it has been advocating for a quarter of a century and there is nothing new about this. Yet, the U.S. Administration attacks the Great Jamahiriyah in an irrational manner. This is manifested in relating the issue of the blacks and other minorities in the United States with the Great Jamahiriyah's dispute with the three Western countries over the Lockerbie issue. This, in fact, calls for a laugh.

The whites in the United States have not recognized the rights of minorities, including Arabs and Muslims. This repression will lead to serious consequences inside the United States. The minorities will not give up their rights to freedom and equality and will not stop their demands that, if not met, will lead to the disintegration of U.S. society, as happened in the former Soviet Union.

Giving rights to the minorities will prevent the repetition of what is taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chechnya, which is the fate awaiting those hiding behind the so-called Lockerbie issue.

The [solution to the] the crisis of the United States lies in returning rights to those entitled to them and eliminating racial discrimination and oppression, as blacks and other minorities must be enabled to reach their legitimate human rights, including self-determination.

It is worth noting that the statement by the White House's official spokesman and his comments on the visit of Louis Farrakhan to the Great Jamahiriyah is considered as an official recognition that the cause of the blacks is winning the sympathy of the world and that blacks know the importance of the Great Jamahiriyah, which is not isolated, and that those isolated are those who deny rights to others. Such a stance stresses the fact that the American Administration continues to deny other people's rights. If this is not the case, why are the blacks not equals to the Jews in the United States, as the latter enjoy all privileges and rights in a blatant and exaggerated way.

Addressing insults to others does not lead to the solution of the problems of the American Administration, particularly those with the minorities calling for their rights and aspiring to ascertain their human character [sentence as heard]. There is no escape from equal status for the blacks and the other minorities in election rights and opening up opportunities to them to submit their candidacies for the highest posts in the United States. This is the logic of the era and that of history.

Morocco

Moroccan Minister on Financial Reforms, French Investments

BR3001111796 Paris LA TRIBUNE DESFOSSES in French 30 Jan 96 p 6

[Interview with Moroccan Finance and Foreign Investment Minister Mohamed Kabbaj by Hounaine Hamiami in Rabat; date not given: "In 1996 Privatizations Will Be Intensified"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hamiani] France and Morocco have just signed a series of bilateral agreements, including one to protect investments...

[Kabbaj] This agreement on the protection of investments comes as Morocco has just signed its association agreement with Europe. It is doubly favorable for us, first of all because we gain in terms of the debt, secondly because it is a way of encouraging French investors. In this way Morocco will buy back 50 percent of French investors' debts against dirhams at a value of around 60 percent. This is also a practice which we could repeat.

[Hamiani] The other part of the accord relates to the cancellation of a debt of 400 million francs for the development of the northern provinces...

[Kabbaj] [King] Hassan II had defined a total priority for the north which led to the creation of the Northern Provinces Development Agency, which was ratified by parliament last spring. With this agency, direct aid and a series of investment incentives will be provided, such as the creation of two totally tax-free export processing zones in Tangiers and Nador. Normally, administrations adopt their own criteria of distribution. Right now we want to develop infrastructure projects which are more useful to the population, a little like we have done in the Saharan provinces.

[Hamiani] The government has launched a vast anti-smuggling campaign. How is this campaign proceeding?

[Kabbaj] Six months ago we reduced customs duties on almost 800 products, for all of which statistics are kept. The result is that customs revenues for these products have risen by 30 percent. In the 1996 finance bill we have further reduced customs duties. All this will enable the representatives of branded goods to reestablish their commercial circuits and make it possible to provide better consumer protection.

[Hamiani] The World Bank has welcomed a series of processes which are under way, the fiscal and financial reforms, the privatization, which some people consider to be too slow...

[Kabbaj] As far as privatization is concerned, 40 enterprises have already been sold. I believe that a certain pace of savings corresponds to a certain rhythm [of privatizations]. If there is a failure, this cools down the process. What we sell must therefore "be worthwhile," and we must take the time to study its real value. In 1996 the process will be speeded up. As for the reforms, the new investment charter generalizes the advantages to all sectors, and the customs reform reduces tariff levels and simplifies the procedures. The main financial reforms in 1996 will be the reform of the stock exchange, foreign exchange liberalization, a new insurance code, a mortgage market, and a 5 percent reduction in the floor on public securities, prior to its being withdrawn at the end of the year.

Moroccan Official Receives UN Envoy, New MINURSO Chief

LD2901230596 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Driss Basri received today Erik Jensen, acting special envoy of the UN secretary general for the Sahara, who was accompanied by the new chief of the identification commission Henrik Vander Klot. On this occasion the interior minister congratulated Mr Klot on his appointment in this post and reaffirmed Morocco's willingness to offer every help to the MINURSO [United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara] in its mission in order to speed up the process of identification.

Moroccan Human Rights Body Protests Violations in Antismuggling Plan

LD2901142496 Rabat MAP in English 1246 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Jan 29 (MAP) — The Moroccan Human Rights Organization (OMDH, independent) has denounced what it describes as "serious human rights violations" noted in the ongoing campaign for struggle against smuggling throughout Morocco.

The local media Monday reported on an open letter sent by the OMDH to the prime minister of Morocco in which it recalls that as part of this campaign "members of the government have repeatedly affirmed that all the related cases should be handled within the respect of the law and the rights of the person".

These two principles have been violated and "particularly serious facts" have been noted, the OMDH said adding that this prompted it to write to the prime minister. The organization also announced that it will publish shortly a report on this campaign and the conditions in which it is carried on.

The anti-smuggling campaign started early January in Morocco under the supervision of the ministers of the interior and justice. According to officials, this campaign is targeting "bigwigs" throughout the country and in particular in the economic capital city Casablanca where many stores have been closed down.

A variety of goods are smuggled into Morocco from Ceuta and Melillia, two northern Moroccan cities still under Spanish rule and also from neighboring Algeria.

Scores of smugglers are standing trial in Casablanca and other cities. In its letter, the OMDH also denounces the "serious violations" of the lawyers' rights in this affair and urges the prime minister "to play his role in implementing the law" in respect of the constitution.

The anti-smuggle campaign is being differently appreciated by the media and the people. While some support it, others denounce the way it is conducted.

A member of the government, Mohamed Ziane, minister of human rights, has even resigned after describing as "illegal and non conform to the law" this campaign and asked the release of all detainees.

The opposition daily newspaper "AL BAYANE" Monday called for the respect of the law in this affair adding that Morocco is now going through its first big legal exam since the 1991-1992 constitutional and legal changes.

The daily notes that this campaign might be followed by struggle campaigns against drug trafficking and corruption.

Bahrain

Bahraini Paper Hails Arab Support for Action Against Riots

JN3001150096 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0740 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 30 Jan (WAKH)—A Bahraini paper says the wonderful popular stance, the great Arab solidarity expressed vis-a-vis the incidents that took place in Bahrain, and the categorical rejection of riots, sabotage, and foreign interference in the country's internal affairs are an expression of support and appreciation for Bahrain.

In an editorial today, the Bahraini newspaper AL-AYYAM says his highness the prime minister highly appreciated this popular stand and the citizens' awareness and eagerness to protect the interests and accomplishments of the homeland. This greatly helped pull the rug out from under the feet of those who seek to harm the country.

The paper points out that this popular stand foiled all outside attempts to drive a wedge between the citizens of this country and incite sectarianism and denominational conflicts, which were categorically rejected by the Bahraini people.

The paper adds: As his highness the prime minister said, people in this country are working harmoniously and cooperatively in the interest of their country, which is the homeland of all. Bahrain derives its strength from its Arab fold. Although small in size, Bahrain is strong with its Arab brothers. These brothers supported Bahrain—leadership and people—in dealing with the recent incidents, combating riots, and rejecting all foreign attempts to harm the security and stability of Bahrain.

The paper adds: This sincere Arab stand was highly valued and appreciated by the leadership and people of Bahrain. This Arab stand indicates that Bahrain is not alone in combating these actions, which are directed from outside. It also makes those who contemplate any action against the country reconsider their calculations a thousand times as all their dreams and attempts will founder on this solid wall.

Concluding, the paper says: This homeland, as the prime minister said, will not allow anyone to obstruct its drive toward building the modern state. These are the words of a statesman and a leader who lived all the stages marking the establishment of this state. These are responsible words that rise to the level of the incidents, tackle them, and go beyond that to broader horizons aspired by the Bahraini people.

Bahrain Islamic Radicals Appear on Qatari Television

MS3001154996 London INDEPENDENT in English 30 Jan 96 p 9

[Report by Michael Sheridan: "Gulf States' Dispute Intensified by 'Zionist' TV Jibe"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A long-running dispute between the small Gulf states of a Bahrain and Qatar has taken an unprecedented turn after Qatar's state television broadcast interviews with radical Islamic opponents of the Bahraini ruling dynasty.

Such a move is unheard of among monarchies of the Gulf, who normally overcome disagreements to co-operate in the suppression of religious dissent. Bahrain and Qatar are members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, which exists to preserve the status quo.

The rulers of Bahrain and Qatar have long been at odds over the ownership of the Hawar islands, small islets between their territories thought to be rich in resources. Bahrain has very little oil, while Qatar possesses enormous reserves of natural gas. A few Ruritanian skirmishes have taken place over the years to little consequence. But civil disorder in Bahrain and dynastic upheaval in Qatar mean that the latest conflict is drawing close attention from Saudi Arabia and from Western powers who base air and naval forces in the area.

There has been serious unrest among the Shiite Muslim majority population of Bahrain, a small archipelago of 600,000 people off the coast of Saudi Arabia. The government said at least 550 suspects had been rounded up recently after riots and explosions in luxury hotels around the capital, Manama.

The leaders of Bahrain's Shiites attack the ruling Al Khalifa family, members of the dominant Sunni strand in Islam. The opposition strongly denies claims by the government that Iran, the only Shiite power in the region, is behind the trouble.

Last year the Bahraini authorities exiled several Shiite clergymen to London, including a charismatic preacher trained in Iran, Shaykh 'Ali Salman, who addressed public meetings to denounce the activities of Ian Henderson, a British veteran who runs Bahrain's security services.

To general astonishment in the Gulf, Shaykh Salman next appeared on Qatari television, whose broadcasts from the capital, Doha, can be seen in Bahrain, on 13 January. He was interviewed sympathetically on a discussion programme with Dr Mansur al-Jamri, a member of a prominent family opposed to the Al Khalifas. The programme was hardly inflammatory, but

Shaykh Salman said those who tried to link Islamic activists to terrorism — as the Bahraini government does — were agents of "the internationalist Zionist movement". In a direct message to the Bahraini regime, the Shaykh added that "dialogue between the religious movement and Arab governments and intellectuals is the only way out for the Islamic world from any future bloodbath".

Although Shaykh Salman and Dr al-Jamri were careful to stress their commitment to dialogue, the very fact that the programme was broadcast signified that relations between Qatar and Bahrain had virtually broken down.

Qatar has lurched between declarations of amity and provocative behaviour ever since its ruler, "the beloved Emir His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani", overthrew his father in an apparently bloodless coup last year. The former Emir was inspecting the family bank deposits in Geneva when he was deposed and is believed to have transferred much of the cash to his own account. No doubt agile princely minds in the Arabian peninsula are focusing on the prospect of his return to Doha.

Yemen

Yemeni Army Launches Attack on Kidnappers of French Tourists

NC3001201196 Paris AFP in English 1944 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 30 (AFP) — The Yemeni army launched an attack Tuesday [30 January] on tribesmen who held 17 French tourists captive in eastern Yemen for four days, officials said.

One soldier was killed and four were wounded in the attack, the officials said, adding that the fighting was continuing into Tuesday evening. There were no casualty figures available for tribesmen.

Security forces had arrested four of the kidnappers after the French tourists were released on Monday, but said they were hunting for 14 accomplices.

Members of the Al-Aslam tribe kidnapped the mainly elderly tourists on Thursday as they returned to Sanaa from a sightseeing tour to Ma'rib province, and held them in the remote village of Ain Hadi, 450 kilometres (270 miles) east of the capital.

The hostages were released on Monday without security forces having to fire a single shot, and said they had been well-treated by their kidnappers.

Before their release, 1,000 security forces had surrounded five villages in which the Al-Aslam tribe live and pointed their guns at the inhabitants.

Tariq 'Aziz on Resolution 986, Relations With French Government

BR3101114796 Paris LE POINT in French 27 Jan 96 pp 62-63

[Report on interview with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz in Baghdad "several weeks ago", signed "A.G.": "Oil Embargo: Negotiations Behind the Scenes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Will Iraq, completely strangled by an unending embargo, come out of its isolation and make a partial return to the oil market under the conditions set by the United Nations? The negotiations were pursued actively this week in New York.

Up to now, Baghdad has been able to sell almost nothing abroad. In the fall, some 10 dhows secretly loaded with dried dates were even stopped and examined in the Gulf.

Deprived of hard currency, Iraq has therefore practically halted all imports and is living in autarchy. The embargo has also provoked runaway inflation: The Iraqi dinar used to be worth $3; today, $1 sells for 2,600 dinars on the black market.

UN Resolution 986, adopted in April 1995, authorizes the export of a limited quota of oil for humanitarian reasons: The equivalent of $1 billion per quarter, or about 700,000 barrels per day. This breath of oxygen would make it possible to alleviate the condition of the Iraqis, but until the last few days Baghdad, judging the resolution's conditions unacceptable, has refused to submit to it. Recently, however, Iraq has indicated that it might soften its position, and is negotiating on this point with the UN. France and Russia, which want to bring the country back into the international community, are playing an important role in these talks.

If Baghdad ended up accepting Resolution 986 without explicitly stating so, this would be a significant development. Receiving LE POINT a few weeks ago in Baghdad, Tariq 'Aziz expressed his reservations about the resolution.

"In fact," the number two of the Iraqi regime thundered, "this resolution poses unacceptable conditions. It forces us to give back without discussion a large part (about one-third) of the money obtained from it to the three "governorships" of the north. But these are no longer under the authority of the Iraqi Government. This amounts to demanding of us that we finance the (Kurdish — LE POINT editor's note) secession of three provinces. Do you believe that the French would accept having an external force attempt to separate a region from the central government while demanding, in addition, the financing of this separation?"

Drawing on a cigar, Tariq 'Aziz also found "particularly strange" another provision of Resolution 986. "Most of the oil which we would export would have to transit Turkey. Why? To compensate Turkey, which is indirectly suffering from the embargo. But we are not the ones who have imposed the embargo!"

Moreover, according to this follower of Saddam, "the 986" is not as generous as people say: "Of $1 billion quarterly, about one- third would thus have to be given to the northern provinces. Another third would be devoted to the operating expenses of the special UN commission based in Iraq. There would then remain some $150 million a month to divide among 20 million Iraqis. Or $6 or $7 per citizen per month, including food and medicine. This is ridiculous."

Under the black and white portrait (Studio Harcourt style) of the young Saddam, and as an employee of the Ministry serves tea, Tariq 'Aziz continues: "The UN special commission, UNSCOM, has been in Baghdad for five years now, and airplanes have been continually photographing Iraq. As to Kuwait, we are no longer there and we have recognized it as a sovereign state. In reality, the United States is waiting for Iraq to become one of its protectorates, like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, to dictate its law for our purchases or the price of oil."

And is he still angry at France for having participated in the Gulf War? "No. It is the government of France which made this choice, not the French people. Moreover, the government has changed. And we know that [French President] Jacques Chirac is one of those leaders who knows Iraq. The Gulf War is a page that has been turned."

Iraqi Oil Ministry Increases Prices of Oil By-Products

JN3001174496 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic 23 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Aghadir Mahdi]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Oil Ministry approved a new tariff effective 22 January for its oil byproducts (gasoline, kerosene, oils, gas oil, and liquid gas).

An official source at the Oil Ministry told AL-QADISIYAH that the increases are to cover the high costs shouldered by the State Enterprise for the Distribution of Oil Byproducts to provide those products and cover the expenses of raw materials and additives imported with hard currency to meet the needs of the production process.

He added that according to the new tariff, the price of gasoline per liter rose from 0.2 dinar to 1.5 dinars. The same rate applies to other byproducts. Thus, prices have increased as follows: Kerosene per one liter is 0.5 dinar, engine oil per one liter is 50 dinars, gas oil per one liter is 0.5 dinar, and the price of liquid gas per one cylinder is 50 dinars.

Iraqi Official Reiterates Position on Normalization With Iran

JN3001163996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1323 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 30 Jan (INA) — Iraq renewed its call on Iran to depart from hesitation and maneuvering and to adopt an objective and serious approach to build good-neighborly relations based on mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and observance of the legitimate rights of the two parties.

Reacting to remarks by the Iranian deputy foreign minister in a statement to INA today, Sa'd al-Faysal, the senior under secretary of the Foreign Ministry, said: Iraq's position has been clear right from the inception in terms of calling on Iran to engage in a serious political dialogue to overcome the past, settle the outstanding problems in a positive spirit, and concentrate efforts on the future in a way that will serve the legitimate interests of the two neighborly countries. He asserted that Iraq has made a series of constructive initiatives to accomplish this goal which is important for the two parties and for security and stability in the region.

'Ali Khorram, Iranian deputy foreign minister, earlier made statements on Iraqi-Iranian relations to the Iranian newspaper KAYHAN [INTERNATIONAL].

Sa'd al-Faysal also said: Some Iranian officials, including Mr. 'Ali Khorram, got accustomed to making statements on Iraqi-Iranian contacts. These statements are different from what they say inside the closed rooms during talks with the Iraqi side. It seems that this can be attributed to the Iranian officials' desire to maneuver and jumble the cards for political ends or to distract attention from their problems.

He said he believes these statements are not useful in any sense. He added: The useful thing for Iran is that the Iranian officials should stop their hesitation which they muffle by statements similar to those of 'Ali Khorram. They should take a courageous step that would make them harmonious with Iran's real interest in normalizing relations with Iraq based on just and solid foundations that observe the interests of the two neighborly countries and contribute effectively to establishing stability and security in the region in pursuance of the two countries' common interests.

The Foreign Ministry under secretary advised 'Ali Khorram in particular to avoid being dragged into chatter and hollow arguments on the credibility of a given country. He noted: Some intruders, both inside and outside the region, tried to this before him. However, they failed utterly.

He said that Iraq sees that there is still an opportunity to embark on the aspired political dialogue, especially if the Iranian side actually realized the importance of normalization of relations with Iraq and acted accordingly. He added: We would like to reiterate that it is Iraq that gave humanitarian issues top precedence to restore confidence between the two parties and engage in a process of normalization of ties, particularly with respect to the release of POW's. The Iranian side is still holding more than 20 thousand Iraqi POW's, while Iraq released all Iranian POW's in 1990.

London Paper Deplores Iraqi-Syrian 'Estrangement'

MM3101093196 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 30 Jan 96 p 1

[Article by 'Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan: "Iraqi-Syrian Estrangement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab League, has said that his country "is very keen" to coordinate with Syria to solve the problem of sharing Euphrates waters with Turkey in a manner that guarantees the two Arab countries' rights in accordance with the rules of international law. These assertions came after a meeting with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, designed to urge the League to espouse the call to convene a meeting at ministerial level to discuss this vital question which concerns the two countries.

Unlucky for Mr. Najm, the Arab League is hesitant to make any efforts to bring views closer between the two countries, and it is avoiding any attempt to return Iraq to the Arab fold for fear of angering the State of Kuwait and its allies. Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has announced on numerous occasions that the time for Arab reconciliation has not yet come, thus closing all doors to any efforts in this connection pending further instructions.

In view of this strange situation it is natural for Turkey to benefit most from the absence of Syrian-Iraqi coordination in all spheres, not just with regard to the water issue. Exploiting the chronic Iraqi-Syrian estrangement, it has built 22 dams and 19 power stations on the Euphrates at a cost of $30 billion, while the Syrian and Iraqi peoples continue to move closer to a famine even without a blockade.

It is understandable for the two countries to differ ideologically and for them to confront one another in the first and second Gulf wars. But we cannot understand how this disagreement can turn into severe enmity five years on and lead to the squandering of huge quantities of water that are a legitimate right to ordinary farmers who have lived for thousands of years on the banks of the two rivers [Euphrates and Tigris].

Contemporary states, which apply a scientific approach in their relations and policies, act rationally even with their worst enemies, and they give precedence to the interests of their people over any personal or even ideological differences, except for the Arab states, which do exactly the opposite.

Is it not strange for Syria and Israel to negotiate for more than five years and for officials in Damascus to make statements to Israeli newspapers and Israeli radio and television stations and not to negotiate with Iraq or make statements to its press?

Is it not painful for contacts between Iraq and Iran to be much better than those between Iraq and Syria despite the eight-year war, the millions killed, and the hundreds of billions of dollars lost?

We are trying to understand the reasons for the estrangement between the two leaderships in Damascus and Baghdad, but we do not understand why it has continued for all these years without any justification. If the dispute is over ways of achieving Arab unity, the nation's ambitions have declined these days to merely safeguarding the cohesion of the one state and trying to avert its partition. But if the dispute is over ways of liberating Palestine, Palestine has been lost, and one of the causes of this is the Syrian-Iraqi dispute, which has paralyzed the region and continues to do so.

It might sound ridiculous to call on the two states to unite their ranks for the sake of the nation's issues and interests. But maybe it is logical to remind them that they are losing a great deal as a result of the current intransigence, while others are making gains at their expense.

The loss of Euphrates waters is the biggest strategic mistake the two countries are making, because these waters belong to the Iraqi and Syrian peoples and should not be abandoned so easily by not meeting to coordinate and to confront the continuing Turkish plunder operations.

We hope that officials in Syria will learn from Israel's care for every drop of water, whether on the Golan Heights or Lake Tiberias, especially as they have dealt with the Israeli negotiators for long enough and now know their methods and maneuvers in this connection. We hope they will use this experience to serve Syria's interests first and Iraq's second in any future negotiations with Turkey over the distribution of water quotas, that is assuming they succeed in their current negotiations with the Israelis.

It is really frustrating: The West has seized the oil and its revenues, Eritrea and Iran have occupied Arab islands in the Red Sea and the Gulf, and here are Israel and Turkey coordinating to steal Arab waters on the Golan, Tigris, and the Euphrates. And it will not be surprising if Ethiopia flexes its muscles at us in the near future and seeks Israel's help, just as Eritrea has done, to build dams to take control of the Nile valley and the distribution of Nile waters.

Once again, we say that we are not talking about higher Arab interests. Nor are we urging the mobilization of armies for a showdown. Nor do we have the courage to use the word liberation, since this word has lost its meaning since the "liberation" of Kuwait. We are merely appealing to the Syrian leadership to look after its people's water and that of the Iraqi people, who are a fraternal people and no less "Ba'thist" than the Syrian people. The first thing to do is to coordinate. Is this too much for this leadership to do?!

Iraqi Culture Ministry Source Views 'Irresponsible' U.S. Statements

JN3001212196 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Ministry of Culture and Information ridiculed commentaries published in THE NEW YORK TIMES, citing U.S. military and diplomatic sources in the Arabian Gulf region, claiming that Iraq may start hostilities once again.

The source also ridiculed statements by General Steven Wright, director of the Military Cooperation Bureau at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait today, in which he claimed that Iraq seeks to threaten its neighbors and that it is reorganizing and modernizing its Armed Forces.

The source said such irresponsible statements by the U.S. general and by U.S. military and diplomatic sources in the Arabian Gulf region is meant to reshuffle cards, especially at this stage and after Iraq decided to start a dialogue with the United Nations to discuss the formula of oil for Iraq's humanitarian needs.

The source added that instability in the entire region is due to the deployment of foreign, particularly U.S., fleets and units in the Arabian Gulf region on the pretext of protecting Gulf states.

As for the Armed Forces, Iraq, just as any other country, has the right to maintain its Armed Forces. This is a purely Iraqi affair and no one has the right to interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs.

The source concluded that Iraq, led by President Saddam Husayn, cares for the stability of the region and is eager to keep it away from foreign intervention in order to serve the interests of the sons of the nation in the Arabian Gulf.

Iraqi Paper Says CIA 'Expert in Harming People'

JN3101123096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0815 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 31 Jan (INA) — The newspaper AL-THAWRAH denounces the U.S. imperialist policy, which wants to impose total hegemony on the world. It also denounces the way the United States manages its crises, as well as its attempts to strengthen its interest at the expense of all peoples and states.

In an article today reacting to the ideas voiced by CIA Director John Deutsch on this policy, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: From the very beginning the United States involved itself in a struggle for survival with the world because it is convinced that its coherence and existence can be guaranteed only by disintegrating and disuniting the other nations and peoples in the world and their entities, and then by reshaping these entities in a way that fits its will, desires, and interests.

AL-THAWRAH says: Deutsch's statement that he expects the acts of violence against his country to increase falls within the context of the CIA's and the FBI's quest to implement new schemes against alleged enemies of the United States.

The paper says that Deutsch's demand that the intelligence services should be strengthened and that a special budget must be allocated delineates U.S. foreign policy in light of the threats against the so-called U.S. interests around the world.

The paper says that the United States is spreading its evil all over the world and against its people. It continues to employ all forms of military and violent aggressions, such as occupying others' territory and imposing all kinds of embargoes, the ugliest form of which are the economic sanctions, against certain states. It also continues to conduct all forms of intelligence; technological, cultural, and media aggression; and economic sabotage.

AL-THAWRAH recalls the role played by the CIA in this field. It says: In coordination with world Zionism and its agencies, the CIA planned and implemented schemes to spread evil and deprive people on the five continents from enjoying economic, food, cultural, and social security, as well as political stability in the countries it had not yet tamed.

The CIA, which is an expert in harming people around the world, declared its inability to finance many espionage networks; rendered many of its agents unemployed; closed several of its centers which are used as facades, such as the U.S. Cultural center in Paris; and froze the cultural programs it had been using to tame the exiles from the Third World. The CIA is now trying to prove its competence by imposing the imperialist-Zionist hegemony on the world.

The paper concludes by saying: The U.S. hegemony can be imposed only by violence, which the Americans call terrorism if others use it as a natural reaction against U.S. aggression.

Iraqi Opposition Says Israeli, U.S., Turkish Help Sought for Jordan's Plan

NC3001203096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Report by Mohammad Beshkar in Beirut on the "News and Reports" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources in Beirut said today that Zionist, Jordanian, Turkish, and U.S. officials met in Tel Aviv two months ago to discuss Jordanian King Husayn's plan on Iraq's future. The sources said the meeting, held on the sidelines of King Husayn's visit to occupied Palestine, sought to promote and implement Jordan's plan for Iraq. Finding the doors of Iraqi opposition closed to the plan of its king, Amman made active moves with Tel Aviv, Ankara, and Washington to pave the way for the implementation of the plan.

The Iraqi opposition sources said Jordan, contrary to all other reports, has not backtracked on its plan for Iraq, but changed the contents, mechanisms, and even the objectives of the declared plan to get the Iraqi opposition forces involved in futile arguments and counter arguments. The sources stressed that Jordan failed to translate its call to establish a federation in Iraq or a confederation between Iraq and Jordan to revive the Hashemite Union into a conference or an expanded meeting for the Iraqi opposition in Jordan because the main opposition Iraqi factions expressed reservations. The Jordanians then invited a representative of the Iraqi regime to participate in the proposed Amman meeting, but Saddam refused to participate in a meeting that publicly seeks to overthrow him, the sources said. The sources did not rule out the possibility of Amman planning a military coup in Iraq by taking advantage of its good relations with military commanders in the Iraqi

Army and Republican Guards units to overthrow the head of the regime while keeping the ruling institutions.

Observers believe that the Iraqi Government's recent attempts to initiate a dialogue with Syria and its continuous efforts to improve the stalled relations between the two countries are part of the endeavor to contain the Jordanian plan and any other plans in the region seeking to overthrow or tighten the noose around the Iraqi regime.

Iraq Protests U.S. Air, Sea Activities to Security Council

JN3001142896 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1000 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 30 Jan (INA)—Iraq protested the hostile and provocative activities of U.S. and other warplanes, which violated Iraqi airspace flying from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In a letter to the president of the UN Security Council, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf asserted that U.S. planes and ships continued during the period 1 July-31 December 1995 to violate the Iraqi airspace and territorial waters, carry out hostile and provocative actions, break the sound barrier over civilian areas, and drop flares over Iraqi farmlands.

The letter indicated that the U.S. warplanes broke the sound barrier over the city of al-Nasiriyah, the Kharanj [placename as transliterated] area, al-Samawah in the al-Muthanna Governorate, and Umm Qasir, and dropped flares over the Governorates of Ninawa and Dahuk.

The letter asserted that a British-flagged launch entered Iraqi territorial waters on 9 August, and that the British frigate No. 89 embarked on the Iraqi tugboat "Damascus" west of the Port of al-Bakr in the Iraqi territorial waters and interrogated its crewmen for 30 minutes.

Sudanese Ambassador to Iraq Criticizes U.S., Discusses Elections

JN3001160296 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1240 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 30 Jan (INA)—Sudan's Ambassador to Iraq Dr. Hasan 'Abidin accused the United States of interfering in Sudan's affairs to harm its national unity and positions.

At a news conference he gave at the Sudanese Embassy today in the presence of correspondents of foreign television networks, local newspapers, and the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, he said that the United States has been trying for years to fabricate false accusations against Sudan and to create problems with its neighbors to weaken its position and impose on it the same blockade that it imposed on Iraq and Libya.

Referring to the legislative and presidential elections to be held in Sudan next March, Dr. 'Abidin said that they would be multiparty, that the freedom of candidacy and competition would be ensured in accordance with justice and equality, and that everybody would be given an opportunity without any interference.

He also said that the freedom of candidacy and voting would not be restricted and that nobody would be isolated by the law or by a political decision unless he wants to boycott or give up politics.

'Abidin added that Constitutional Decree No. 13 provides for the president to be elected freely and directly and that he should win more than half of the votes, asserting that the presidential candidate must be a Sudanese, must be at least 40 years old, and must be nominated by 20 eligible voters.

The Sudanese ambassador said the election of the National People's Assembly that would coincide with the presidential elections constitutes a transition from revolutionary legitimacy to constitutional legitimacy. Such legitimacy, he said, would be granted to the National People's Assembly to control the state's executive organs, to reconstruct institutions on a constitutional base, and to protect Sudan's permanent Constitution.

Dr. 'Abidin added that 9,476,908 people would cast their votes and that candidacy would start on 3 February and would last two weeks to be followed by the election campaign on 16 February, which would last until [words indistinct] 1 March vote casting, which would last until 13 March, the day of the announcement of the results.

He pointed out that observers and the media would be invited to verify the neutrality, freedom, and fairness of the elections.

At the end of his statements, the Sudanese ambassador said this new experience in Sudan would lead to stability and comprehensive progress in Sudan.

Saddam Orders Military Airports Closed in North

LD3001133096 Tehran IRNA in English
1313 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ilam, Jan. 30, IRNA — President Saddam Husayn of Iraq recently ordered the closure of four military airports in Kirkuk, northern Iraq, to civilian and military flights, said the Voice of Freedom radio affiliated to the Iraqi opposition, on Monday [29 January].

According to the radio, monitored here, the order was issued following escape of an Iraqi pilot with a warplane from an airport in Kirkuk.

The defector pilot joined the Iraqi Kurdish opposition, added the radio.

Opposition Radio Assails Baghdad Regime's Stand on Resolution 986

NC3001160496 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 30 Jan 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] No other ruler is as criminal and shameless as Saddam Husayn. This ruler, and the other pillars of his regime who are quite as shameless as he is, rejected [UN Security Council] Resolution 986 nine months ago on the pretext that it infringed on Iraq's national sovereignty. The Iraqi people paid a very dear price for that rejection. Saddam and his family, however, fed on plenty while the masses went hungry.

Today the regime is announcing that it is willing to consider implementing the above resolution and has turned its acceptance into a festival. In Baghdad shots were fired in the air to celebrate what the regime's media have touted as a great historical achievement.

How was the acceptance of a resolution infringing on the country's national sovereignty transformed into a great historical achievement?

Why is a resolution permitting UN inspection and destruction of Iraqi weapons not considered an infringement of national sovereignty but a resolution that does not provide the regime with a financial benefit regarded as such? The revenue obtained as a result of the implementation of Resolution 986 must be spent on food and medicines for the people.

Saddam always tries to avoid telling the truth. We know very well that he accepted the resolution not because he wishes to procure food for the people but because he realized that his continued refusal has reached a critical stage and threatens his continued hold on power. He hastened to accept the resolution but described it as a defense of national sovereignty.

An old proverb says: If you have no shame, you can do whatever you want.

'Massacre' of Iraqi Oppositionists Reported in al-'Adl Area

MM3101114696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Jan 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Confrontation Ends With 'Massacre'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — People arriving from Baghdad said yesterday that the al-'Adl area, which is in Maysan Governorate in southern Iraq and occupied mainly by Shiites, was the scene last week of bloody fighting between its inhabitants and units from the Iraqi Army, which encircled and bombarded it with all types of weapons.

The arrivals said that a group of wanted Iraqi oppositionists had been fortifying themselves in the villages in the area. They described the fighting as "a massacre."

Travelers have told AL-HAYAH that these oppositionists had been "fighting against the Iraqi Army in the adjacent marshlands area, and they infiltrate into the [al-'Adl] area to visit their families from time to time. But on the last occasion they were lured by their partisan relatives." The travelers pointed out that security forces "encircled the houses of their families to arrest them," but the families "refused to submit to their orders and opened fire, killing some security men." The travelers said that security forces "had to request reinforcements, but they still failed to confront the families and the rebels," and "some partisan elements and public security officers were slaughtered in front of their colleagues."

The arrivals cited eyewitnesses as saying that women and children took part in confronting the security forces, which had sought the Army's help after their failure to end the all-out rebellion.

Eyewitnesses described the Army's intervention as "a massacre," saying that "units from the Army encircled the area from all directions and began to bombard it, sometimes accurately and other times haphazardly.

The siege and the bombardment, which continued for a whole day, resulted in some houses being destroyed while their occupants were still inside and some of the rebels being arrested. Other rebels who came from the adjacent marshlands area to reinforce the resistance in the area were also arrested. Those arrested were executed immediately in front of their families. Those who were still alive — men, women, and children — were sent to unknown destination.

The arrivals pointed out that this is the second time the al-'Adl area has witnessed such a bloody and fierce rebellion. The first took place in 1992 on the first anniversary of the uprising that broke out in 1991. At that time Iraqi forces annihilated "half of its inhabitants" after fierce resistance that lasted for three days. Reports of this annihilation were leaked to the Western media.

The arrivals said that the al-'Adl area belongs administratively to al-Majar al-Kabir district and is inhabited by the Bani Lam, Al Bu Muhammad, and al-Sawa'id tribes, in addition to some Al Bu Azairij, al-Yazun, and al-Sudan tribes. These tribes have fought the central authority in Baghdad since Ottoman rule. But the ruling Ba'thist regime suppressed their rebellion by executing their chiefs and expelling some of them to remote areas.

Opposition Radio Details Attacks on Iraqi Government Officials

NC3001161296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamic resistance groups carried out several jihad operations against the terrorist dens of the tyrant Saddam Husayn's regime this month, killing or wounding many of the regime's mercenaries.

According to reports from inside Iraq, an Islamic resistance group attacked a ruling party office in al-Harthah in al-Basrah Governorate on 11 January. One ruling party member was killed and two others were wounded.

According to the reports, other resistance fighters ambushed the criminal Kamil Yasin, the ruling party's ranking official in al-Najaf Governorate, on the road between Karbala' and al-Najaf on 13 January. The criminal was wounded but managed to escape and one of his bodyguards was killed.

The reports said that the security forces closed the road for a whole hour in a futile attempt to arrest the attackers.

In another development a violent explosion rocked the Tariq Bin-Ziyad camp on the outskirts of al-Mada'in on 14 January. This was reported today by the newspaper AL-SHAHADAH, which added that the explosion occurred in a weapons store in the camp. Firefighting vehicles and ambulances hurried to the scene.

The newspaper said that the oppressive security organs of Saddam's regime closed off the road leading to the camp and cordoned off the entire area. It added that the causes of the explosion and the resulting losses are not yet known.

Beilin 'Not Certain' Syria Agreement Possible This Year

TA3101111196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Beilin says he is not certain that it is possible to achieve an agreement with Syria this year. The time for attaining an agreement this year is running out, and in fact we still have only several weeks or months at our disposal. Minister Beilin accused the Syrian Government of preventing progress in the negotiations by its opposition to compromises on the main issues: water, security, and borders. Mr. Beilin spoke in Paris after meeting the French foreign minister.

Syrians Show Interest in Israeli Elections, Impact on Talks

TA3001193596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Live report by political correspondent Nisim Mish'al]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Syrians are also showing interest in the Israeli national guessing game of early elections, yes or no. Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian delegation, asked Uri Savir whether Israeli reports are true that Shim'on Peres plans to move the elections forward. Savir replied that the prime minister is indeed pondering the issue, but has not yet made up his mind. In any event, Savir added, early elections in Israel will not affect the continuation of the talks between the two countries.

The Syrians are trying to ascertain the impact of early elections on the future of the talks: Will they slow down? Will the current format be retained? Can decisions be made at such a time?

Sources in Jerusalem said tonight that if the elections are brought forward Peres will propose continuing the talks in their present format and accelerating their pace the day after the elections; that is, of course, if he is elected prime minister.

The Americans are also very interested in the issue of early elections in Israel, but the impression is that they are against such a move. An agreement between Israel and Syria, if reached by the time of the U.S. elections in November 1996, would be credited to Bill Clinton.

Finally, the Syrians are well aware of the effect that Warren Christopher's visit to the region next week might have on the decision whether or not to bring the Israeli elections forward.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 30 January adds: "The current round of talks with the Syrians at Wye Plantation will apparently end tomorrow without a breakthrough. Senior political sources estimated this evening that the fate of the negotiations will be decided during the upcoming visit of the U.S. secretary of state. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that Christopher will try to formulate a document of understanding on the security arrangements issue, in the wake of which it would be possible for the two countries to open detailed negotiations."]

Peres Briefs 'Senior' U.S. Official on Early Election Plans

TA3101091696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has outlined to the Americans his plans on whether he will call for early elections. An American source says the negotiations between Israel and Syria in Maryland will end as scheduled this evening and will not be extended until later in the week, as basic differences remain between the two sides. David Ze'ev reports:

[Begin Ze'ev recording] In what was described by an informed source in Jerusalem as a long conversation, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told a senior U.S. official of his plans concerning the option of going to early elections. The source said the prime minister made his plans quite clear, but left room for a change under certain circumstances. The source would not elaborate. As we have reported, among American officials there is the belief that Secretary of State Warren Christopher would not want to carry out his Damascus-Jerusalem shuttle mission next week if he believed that right after he left the region Prime Minister Peres announced his intention to move for an early ballot. At least in public, Peres has tried to drop the linkage between progress in the Syrian talks and early elections. But with this round of negotiations between Israel and Syria in Maryland nearing its conclusion, a high-level U.S. decision is to be made — taking the chances of an early elections announcement into account — on whether Secretary Christopher himself will come here during the first half of next week, or if peace coordinator Dennis Ross would be dispatched instead. The Americans say they are far from decreasing their involvement in the Syrian track, as sending Ross first would only be a technical decision and that the secretary of state would come later, after Peres made the potential announcement on early elections. [end recording]

Peres Said Decided in Favor of Early Elections

TA3101102996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We are opening with a report we have just received from our political correspondent Shlomo Raz, who is accompanying Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on his way to London. Shlomo Raz reports that Prime Minister Peres has in effect decided to call early elections. This report may not be surprising, but it certainly finalizes what has been hanging in the air for quite some time now. Shim'on Peres says that over the next few weeks he will decide the date for the elections, taking into consideration, among other things, the economic situation, labor relations, and wage problems. Peres says there is no connection between the negotiations with Syria and the elections. Whether the elections are held on time or are brought forward, the negotiations will continue beyond the elections. The prime minister said we have explained to the Americans that the elections should be dissociated from the negotiations with Syria. The prime minister assesses that Christopher will have to visit the region several more times in order to deal with the Syrian track. Mr. Peres said the report he received from Maryland this morning was not bad.

Our correspondent Shlomo Raz points out that this in effect means that the prime minister has decided to bring the elections forward. The date, however, has still not been determined.

U.S. Demand, 'Nervousness' About Early Elections Reported

TA3101124096 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 31 Jan 96 p 14

[Report by Hemi Shalev and Avino'am Bar-Yosef in Maryland]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration is demanding that Shim'on Peres announce his intentions regarding the possibility of early elections in Israel, political elements said in Jerusalem last night.

The elements stated that the Americans have evinced nervousness about reports on the intention to bring the elections forward — this, in anticipation of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's upcoming arrival in the region next week.

In the course of the talks at Wye Plantation, Maryland, the U.S. representatives repeatedly inquired about Peres' intentions. They were told that he has not decided yet on his course of action.

Israeli sources in Washington confirmed that, concurrently with the formal discussions, the United States has been conducting informal talks with Israel in an attempt to ascertain the government's plans regarding early elections. According to them, administration elements are afraid that early elections will close the window of opportunity on a peace arrangement with Syria.

Secretary Christopher yesterday joined the discussions between the Israeli and Syrian delegations at Wye Plantation. Senior U.S. sources told MA'ARIV last night that although the talks addressed in-depth issues, progress has been slow.

[Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew on 31 January publishes on page 2 a report on the Maryland talks by the newspaper's political correspondent, which adds: "The Americans have hinted that bringing forward the Knesset elections may hurt the negotiations. This is one of the problems interfering with Peres' decision on early elections. If an agreement is achieved with Syria, it will be credited to the Clinton administration, and the Clinton administration would probably like the negotiations to prosper for the purpose of the presidential elections in America."]

Shahaq Briefs Knesset Committee on Lebanon, Syria Talks

TA3001164296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The chief of staff said today at a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that he is very worried about the situation in south Lebanon and about the vulnerability of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers to attacks. The car bomb which exploded there yesterday attests to Hizballah's desire to go on attacking the IDF and the SLA, he said, and since Christopher's visit Hizballah has been increasingly coordinating its activities with the Palestinian organizations and Amal.

In Shahaq's opinion, if the elections are brought forward due to stalemate in the negotiations with Syria, Hizballah will try to step up the attacks and the Syrians may not be interested in curbing it.

A senior intelligence officer told the committee that Hizballah is looking for alternate routes to transport arms, including Iranian trucks driving through Turkey to Lebanon. This was reported by our Knesset correspondent Yo'el Nir.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 30 January includes a related report by Knesset affairs correspondent Hadar Vismonsky adding: "Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq told the committee members that so far Israel has not submitted a demand to Syria that it remove its army from Lebanon. He added, however, that Israel will certainly want to know how Syria intends to deploy its army in peacetime."]

Peres Plans Hotels on Remaining Land After Golan Withdrawal

TA3001123496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 30 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has drafted a plan according to which Israel will build a chain of big hotels along the waterfront on the eastern shores of Lake Tiberias after Israel and Syria sign a peace accord. Peres has not just been talking with his recent remarks about the importance of hotels and notably those he made at the recent cabinet session, where he said that 10 hotels can provide just as much security as 10 army posts.

Peres told his associates that if a peace accord is secured with Syria in which the international border serves as the withdrawal line, Israel will use the 10-meter-wide strip of land on the northeastern banks of Lake Tiberias that will remain in its possession to build an access road to a string of large hotels to be built along the waterfront. According to the prime minister, such hotels could serve as a tourist attraction and be marketed as part of a tour package covering Israel and Syria. Peres believes that turning the Golan Heights into a thriving tourist and industrial region is an important element in terms of the security arrangements and the prevention of a sudden Syrian invasion.

Israeli Soldier Dies in Janin Stabbing; Protest Lodged With PA

TA3001155596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A reconstruction of this morning's stabbing attack in which an Israeli civilian was seriously wounded ended some time ago at the Dotan Base in Janin. The assailant was a 19-year-old resident of the nearby refugee camp, who said he did what he did because of a dispute with his relatives, financial problems, and to solve some personal troubles. It turns out that he managed to pass a metal detector at the entrance to the base without the soldiers noticing the two knives he was carrying on his body. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the assailant is a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activist who had been arrested by Israel in the past.

Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories, lodged a protest over the incident with Jamil al-Tarifi, the Palestinian Authority [PA] official in charge of civilian affairs. Our correspondent reports that Gen. Shahor held the PA responsible, saying it does not do enough to fight terror. Gen. Shahor added that the incident also represented a stab in the back of the Palestinians who come to the Civil Administration offices in Janin to receive services.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 30 January adds: "We have just received an IDF [Israel Defense Force] spokesman's announcement confirming that an IDF soldier, Staff Sergeant Ehud Tal, was killed this morning in the stabbing incident in the Janin District Liaison and Coordination Office."]

Sarid: Peres Says No West Bank Jewish Town To Be Built

TA3001142296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following a meeting with the prime minister, Minister Yosi Sarid said that Mr. Peres told him the ultra-Orthodox town of Matityahu will not be built. Speaking to our correspondent Shulamit Schmerling, Sarid said that Meretz is opposed to building a town beyond the Green Line and that the prime minister understands its position.

Israel Concerned Over Ethiopian Blood Issue, U.S. Black Relations

TA3001163496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources in the Israeli Foreign Ministry are concerned that the extensive media coverage given to the Ethiopian Jews' blood donations affair may harm attempts to improve relations with the U.S. black community. Reports sent by Israeli Consulates in the United States to the Foreign Ministry indicate those offices are receiving hate calls following the incident. Avi Granot, Israel's ambassador to Ethiopia, this morning said he told the Ethiopian foreign minister that the decision to throw away the blood donations was stupid and does not conform with government policy. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports on the affair:

[Begin recording] [Segal] The blood donation affair is causing great interest abroad and is being widely reported on in many countries, especially in the United States. It is feared that the affair may harm Israeli efforts to forge ties with the black community in the United States. Arye Meckel, Israel's consul general in Atlanta, sent a cable to the Foreign Ministry in which he expressed concern that the affair may harm the intricate and sensitive contacts Israel is maintaining in a bid to get closer to the black community. Nimrod Barqan, Israel's consul general in San Francisco, reported that hate calls have been received by the Israeli Consulate in the city. This is what Foreign Ministry Spokesman Dani Schek has to say on the affair:

[Schek] Immediately after the affair became public we realized there would be problems with many circles abroad, mainly in North America, where there is great sensitivity to questions of race and racial discrimination. For our part, we are doing everything possible to contain the damage and explain that the problem is one of public health rather than any premeditated intention to harm the Israeli Ethiopian community based on color. [passage omitted]

[Segal] The Foreign Ministry's information effort is focusing on an attempt to explain that this is not a case of government policy of discrimination, and to correct the damage caused in international public opinion. [end recording]

IDF Closes Ramallah to Israelis; Soldiers Detained, Freed

TA3101091996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has closed off the Palestinian-ruled area of Ramallah to Israeli traffic due to recent stone-throwing incidents. Settlers have complained that Israeli vehicles traveling on the Jerusalem-Bet El road through Ramallah have been hit continually by stones. In one incident a settler was injured and had to be treated in hospital.

IDF soldiers have arrested two Arabs who broke through a roadblock at the Gush 'Etzyon interchange. The two are being questioned. It's still unclear why they broke through.

Palestinian Police last night arrested three uniformed IDF soldiers who carried guns into the PLO ruled area of the southern entrance to Ramallah. The three were detained for a short while and then released.

IDF Spokesman Denies Allegations on Killing of 3 Hamas Members

TA3001160896 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 30 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bassam 'Id, a Palestinian human rights activist who claims to have conducted a detailed debriefing at the scene of the incident, says that the three Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] men who were killed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers near Janin on the eve of the Palestinian elections were apparently not shot in response to firing on the soldiers.

The three victims — Tariq Mansur (23), 'Abd-al-Rahim Jarradat (22), and 'Alan Abu-'Ara (21) — lived in Janin and were known Hamas activists who had even been arrested a few times by the IDF.

Based on testimony by Palestinian agricultural workers who were on the scene at the time of the incident, 'Id claims that the car with the three Hamas members drove past an IDF roadblock between the village of Jalamah and Janin. The roadblock had been set up to prevent Israelis from entering the area, and was manned at that time by four soldiers.

The eyewitnesses recounted that immediately after the car drove past the roadblock the four soldiers took positions on the road and fired fiercely at the car. The car came to a halt after a few meters, but the soldiers kept firing for a few more moments. Then two soldiers approached the car and opened fire at it from close range. Based on this testimony, 'Id claims that the soldiers apparently conducted what is known as a "confirmation of death procedure."

Immediately afterwards the soldiers summoned reinforcements, who arrived on the scene to tow the car with the dead bodies away, but local Palestinians gathered at the site and forcefully prevented it. The Palestinians who removed the bodies from the scene asserted that they were riddled with dozens of bullets and that they did not see any guns in the car. They added that the car's engine was still running and that the hand brake was on, which shows that the car had stopped and was not trying to escape.

Responding to these claims, the IDF spokesman said that the terrorists opened fire on the four IDF soldiers at the roadblock and that the latter returned fire. One soldier was even lightly wounded in the leg from bullets fired by one of the terrorists.

The spokesman stressed that the soldiers did not conduct a "confirmation of death procedure," and that at the end of the incident three guns were found in the car which were given to Palestinian Police officers.

The spokesman noted that Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of IDF troops in the West Bank, conducted a detailed debriefing on the incident and praised the soldiers' conduct.

Israeli Border Police Chief on Plans for 1996

TA3001151196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 30 Jan 96 p A4

[Report by Re'uven Shapira and ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Text] By the end of 1996, the Border Police will made up of 8,000 men, making up one-third of the total Israel Police force. The Border Police will assume authority over additional areas, including the dividing line between Israel and the territories, the passages between them, and the city of Elat. This was stated yesterday by Commander Yisra'el Sadan, Border Police chief.

The force will set up four district commands to protect the dividing line against criminal and terrorist activity. The commands will cooperate with the regular Israel Police and operate Border Police units in the dividing line area. They will also operate an extended intelligence network, patrols, and other means. A fence will be erected only near Qalqilyah and al-Tayyibah.

As part of a new deployment along the dividing line area, the Border Police will reexamine the tasks and missions of its undercover units but, according to Sadan, there is no talk about manpower cutbacks at this time. The Border Police are currently busy organizing and setting up units that will assume responsibility over the dividing line area. The force will use advanced technological means and expand intelligence activity. Among other things, it will reorganize its rural patrols, which will employ all-terrain vehicles in cooperation with the Civil Guard.

Commander Sadan added that the Border Police are ready for the protection of the safe passage between the autonomy areas and has set up a unit to deal with this based in Kibbutz Yad Mordekhay. The Border Police are awaiting instructions from the political echelons to start the safe passage of Palestinians on Israeli roads. Sadan praised the activities of the joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols and the cooperation between the Border Police and the Palestinian Police. He noted that dozens of patrols are currently operating, noting that suspiciousness between the sides has dropped and coordination and cooperation is good and efficient.

There is no problem today with drafting IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers to command the patrols, subject to the Border Police. Another 180 officers will join the force this year, after they undergo special training.

Draft of Shin Bet Law Reported

TA2701131696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Jan 96 p A2

["The Main Points of the Shin Bet Draft Law" — HA'ARETZ headline]

[FBIS Translated Text]

The Shin Bet

(A) The Shin Bet that existed before the implementation of this law is the General Security Service [GSS] of the State of Israel.

(B) The Shin Bet structure, units, and their missions will be determined by Shin Bet regulations.

Head of the Shin Bet

(A) The head of the Shin Bet will be appointed by a government plenum, upon the recommendation of the prime minister.

(B) The term in office of the head of the Shin Bet will be five years, unless the government specifies a shorter tenure in the appointment decision. The government may extend his appointment for one or more terms not to exceed two years.

(C) The head of the Shin Bet will be in charge of managing the Shin Bet, operating, and developing it. To this end, he will determine Shin Bet regulations, pending the prime minister's approval.

GSS Subordination

(A) The Shin Bet is subordinate to the government; the government will approve the Shin Bet's goals subject to this law.

(B) The prime minister will be in charge of the Shin Bet on behalf of the government.

Ministerial Committee

(A) The government will appoint a ministerial committee on Shin Bet affairs to operate on its behalf on issues it will determine.

(B) The ministerial committee will consist of no more than five members. The prime minister will serve as its chairman, and its members will include the defense, justice, and public security ministers.

Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs

(A) Following consultations with the chairmen of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee, the Knesset speaker will appoint a joint subcommittee on Shin Bet affairs.

(B) The chairman of this committee will be the chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. It will also include the chairman and another member of the Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee, and two members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

(C) The meetings of the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs will be closed, and publication of the issues discussed or presented there will be forbidden, unless the chairman orders otherwise, after hearing the position of the head of the Shin Bet.

(D) Anyone who reveals or publishes anything said or presented at the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs without obtaining appropriate authorization, will be sentenced to three years in prison. Anyone who causes such a publication or revelation through negligence will be sentenced to one year in prison.

The Shin Bet's Objectives and Duties

The Shin Bet is in charge of upholding the state's security, regime and institutions and protecting it from terrorist threats, espionage, disclosure of secrets, and other activity harmful to the above, as well as protecting and promoting the vital state interests determined by the government. To this end the Shin Bet will fulfill the following duties in Israel and abroad:

(A) Frustrating and preventing illegal activities aimed at harming the aforementioned people;

(B) Protecting people, information, and places specified by the government;

(C) Determining the security clearance criteria for positions and jobs in the civil service, with the exception of elected officials and other bodies specified by the government, as well as determining and monitoring the security suitability of a person to a classified position or job;

(D) Determining the security procedures for bodies specified by the government;

(E) Providing advice and evaluations to the government and other bodies specified by the government;

(F) Other activities determined by the government aimed at protecting and promoting vital state interests;

(G) Collecting and receiving information to protect and promote the aforementioned issues.

The Shin Bet's General Authority

(A) In order to discharge its duties the Shin Bet is authorized through its workers to:

(1) Receive and collect information;

(2) Transfer information to other bodies in accordance with the rules to be set and all laws;

(3) Investigate suspicions of felonies or conduct investigations in order to prevent felonies in the areas stipulated in Clause 7(A) or in connection with the Shin Bet's activities in accordance with Clause 7(F), if it is decided by the government;

(4) Use a person who is not a Shin Bet employee to carry out missions, in accordance to rules to be specified;

(B) In order to fulfill the Shin Bet's duties in accordance with Clauses 7(A) and 7(B), a Shin Bet employee will have the police authority in accordance with the 1982 Criminal Procedure Law, the 1969 Criminal Procedure Order (Arrest and Search), the 1969 Law on Authority To Conduct Searches in Times of Emergency, and the Aviation Law (Civil Aviation Safety); all in accordance with regulations or rules to be stipulated, and in consultation with the minister in charge of each particular law.

Special Interrogation Powers To Prevent Terror

(A) Were a Shin Bet investigator to have reasonable grounds to believe that a suspect was involved in serious terrorist activity and is in possession of information whose immediate attainment is vital to prevent a real danger to the security of the state and to the life, liberty, or physical safety of a person, in accordance with Clause (B) he is entitled also to use measures in the interrogation of the aforementioned person that may put pressure on the suspect, if he is convinced that its use is vital to obtain the information that will prevent the danger and that there is no other reasonable way to prevent that same danger;

(B) The types of measures that a Shin Bet investigator is entitled to use in the course of an investigation under the circumstances specified in Clause (A), the conditions for their use, including the conditions to ensure that the suspect's health is not harmed, as well as control and documentation of their use will be spelled out in regulations. These, however, should not include interrogation measures whose use could cause the suspect pain or serious suffering, or whose use would involve cruelty or inhumanity.

Searches for Intelligence Purposes in Border Terminals

(A) In order to discharge the Shin Bet's duties in accordance with Clauses 7(A), 7(B), or 7(F), Shin Bet employees in Israel's border terminals specified in the Shin Bet regulations are entitled to search the body, belongings, or vehicle of a person in his presence and to confiscate any object or information;

(B) Were the Shin Bet employee stipulated in (A) to have reasonable grounds to believe that the belongings, luggage, or vehicle of a person or other goods in the Israeli border terminal contain an object or information vital for discharging the Shin Bet's duties in accordance with Clauses 7(A), 7(B), or 7(F), he is entitled to search the belongings, luggage, vehicle, or other goods even in the absence of their owner and without their knowledge and to confiscate any object or information;

(C) An object or information confiscated according to (A) or (B) may be checked or moved as the case may be and they will be retained for the time necessitated by the confiscation;

(D) In the context of this article, a "border terminal," including a checkpoint between Israel and another area, is equivalent to its application in the law on the implementation of the interim agreement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Discreet Search of Vehicles and Premises for Intelligence Purposes

(A) The president of the district court may authorize Shin Bet employees, as stipulated in the regulations, to enter vehicles or premises, conduct searches, and confiscate any object or information — in the absence of their owner or keeper and without his knowledge — if he is convinced that information vital for discharging the Shin Bet's duties in accordance with Clause 7(A), 7(B), or 7(F) is encountered in that vehicle or premises, and that it is reasonably impossible to obtain the objective of the search otherwise.

(B) Despite what is mentioned in (A), the prime minister is entitled to:

(1) Give written permission to conduct the aforementioned search if he is convinced that the search is vital and cannot be postponed and that there is not enough time to obtain permission in accordance with (A);

(2) Specify in the regulations, with the approval of the ministerial committee and the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs, the type of places or cases where permission to conduct the aforementioned discreet search will be given by the prime minister.

(3) When the aforementioned permission is given by the prime minister in accordance with (A) and (B), a report on the permission must be given to the attorney general within seven days.

(C) The permission in accordance with (A) or (B) should specify the premises to which the permit applies and the object or information whose confiscation is being sought if they are known in advance, as well as the validity of the permit.

(D) The stipulations in Article 10(C) will also apply, with the necessary alternations, to searches according to this article.

Reporting

(A) The head of the Shin Bet will report to the ministerial committee from time to time and no less than once every three months about the Shin Bet's activities, and the committee will also be given special reports at its request, in accordance with the rules to be stipulated.

(B) The head of the Shin Bet will report to the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs from time to time and no less than once every three months about the Shin Bet's activities, and the committee will also be given special reports at its request, in accordance with the rules to be stipulated.

Shin Bet's Comptroller

(A) The prime minister will appoint a comptroller to the Shin Bet, who is not a Shin Bet employee, after consulting the head of the Shin Bet.

(B) The comptroller's term in office will be four years, and the prime minister is entitled to extend it by another term that does not exceed three years.

(C) The comptroller will help the government and the ministerial committee discharge their duties.

(D) The comptroller will be in charge, in accordance with the regulations to be set, of checking and dealing with requests, complaints, and claims against the Shin Bet, its employees, or anybody acting on its behalf, except for complaints according to the fourth chapter of the Police Order.

(E) In discharging his duties, the comptroller will be subject to the stipulations of the internal control law (henceforth in this article "the control law") with the following alterations:

(1) In accordance with the control law the person in charge will be the prime minister;

(2) Suspension of the comptroller in the context of Article 12 of the control law will be done only with the approval of the ministerial committee;

(3) The regulations of the control law will not apply to the internal comptroller unless this is approved by the prime minister;

(4) The comptroller will also present a report about his findings to the ministerial committee. The prime minister is entitled to instruct the internal comptroller to give a report to the authorities and to other officials.

Discipline

(A) The 1963 State Service Law (Discipline) will apply to all Shin Bet employees subject to the amendments to the regulations.

(B) The head of the Shin Bet is entitled to include in the Shin Bet regulations additional ordinances about the regime and discipline that will prevail in the Shin Bet.

Security Suitability

(A) The employment of a person in a position or job calling for a security clearance as specified in Clause 7(C) will be in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the regulations.

(B) Anybody who sees himself harmed by a decision pertaining to his lack of security suitability for a classified position or job may appeal the decision to a committee headed by a judge or anybody qualified to be a judge who will be appointed by the prime minister in consultation with the justice minister.

(C) Instructions about the employer's security clearance requirements from its employees, informing a person about his security unsuitability, and ways of approaching the committee, its powers, and its procedures will be specified in the regulations.

Security Information

Classified information will be handled in accordance with the instructions to be specified in the regulations.

Responsibility Waiver

A Shin Bet employee or a person acting on behalf of the Shin Bet will not bear criminal responsibility for a deed or misdeed committed unintentionally and within reason in the framework of his duties and in order to discharge them.

Secrecy

(A) The identity of Shin Bet employees or anybody acting on its behalf, in the past or at present, is confidential.

(B) A Shin Bet employee or anybody acting on its behalf, in the past or at present (henceforth in this clause "employee"), will not give out information obtained as part of his job or as part of his activities in the Shin Bet to people not authorized to receive it, unless written permission to that effect is received in accordance with the Shin Bet regulations.

(C) The prime minister is entitled to permit the publication of information prohibited according to this clause, and he is also entitled to include instructions in the regulations about permission to publish information.

(D) This clause does not detract from the minister's authority according to Articles 44 and 45 of the 1971 Evidence Order (New Version) or from the censor's authority according to the 1945 Emergency Regulations or from any other authority to prevent publication according to any law.

(E) Anybody revealing or publicizing the identity of an employee without permission in accordance with this clause will be sentenced to one year imprisonment.

(F) An employee who discloses or publishes information without permission in accordance with this clause will be sentenced to five years imprisonment. A person who causes disclosure or publication through negligence will be sentenced to three years imprisonment.

Restrictions on Shin Bet Employees

The prime minister will specify in the regulations the restrictions applying to Shin Bet workers, and their spouses, during their employment in the Shin Bet and afterward, to the extent that this is required in order to discharge their duties, in order to secure the Shin Bet's integrity, or to uphold the personal safety of Shin Bet employees and former employees. The restrictions on spouses will apply only during the period that the spouse is employed in the Shin Bet.

Implementation and Regulations

The prime minister is in charge of implementing this law, and he is entitled, with the approval of the ministerial committee and the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs, to issue regulations pertaining to its implementation, including the following issues: (A) Discipline; (B) Restrictions on Shin Bet employees and their spouses; (C) Claims and complaints; (D) Appeals about security unsuitability; (E) Permission to publish information banned in accordance with Article 18; (F) Shin Bet employees exercising the authority of policemen.

Rules

The prime minister is entitled to issue written rules, with the approval of the ministerial committee and the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet Affairs, regarding the following issues: (A) Investigation measures of the Shin Bet and control of their use. (B) Searches and discreet searches. (C) Securing information, security clearance, and security suitability. (D) Reporting to the ministerial committee and the Knesset Committee on Shin Bet affairs. (E) Using people not employed by the Shin Bet to carry out missions. (F) Transferring information from the Shin Bet to other bodies. (G) Ways of protecting and publishing the rules. (H) Exercising a policeman's authority and the types of documentation that a Shin Bet employee is entitled to bear in order to discharge his duties, as well as using the authority in accordance with this law and the ways of executing it.

Shin Bet Regulations

The head of the Shin Bet is entitled, with the prime minister's approval and subject to the stipulations in Clauses 20 and 21, to issue written regulations pertaining to the duties of the Shin Bet, including the following issues:

(A) The Shin Bet's structure, its units and their duties, including the job description of Shin Bet positions, responsibility, subordination, and appointments;

(B) VIP security;

(C) Assigning security issues to other bodies and institutions;

(D) Permission to give information on issues pertaining to the Shin Bet;

(E) Regime and discipline;

(F) Protecting and defining the classification of the Shin Bet regulations.

Publication, Secrecy, and Responsibility

(A) The regulations according to this law will be published in the Israeli Government's official gazette. The Shin Bet rules and regulations do not require publication in the gazette and are confidential.

(B) The protection of the Shin Bet rules and regulations, including their classification, will be stipulated respectively in the Shin Bet's rules and regulations.

(C) A person will not bear any criminal or disciplinary responsibility based on rules or regulations that were not published in the gazette, unless they were brought to his knowledge otherwise.

Abidance With the Law

This law does not detract from the authority of the Shin Bet and its employees according to all other laws.

Jordan's al-Kabariti Reacts to Iraqi Minister's Criticism

JN3001180496 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 31 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi ministers made statements last week in which they attacked Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. The first attack was launched by Iraqi Foreign Minister [Muhammad Sa'id] al-Sahhaf. The Iraqi trade minister also made a statement to this effect to the newspaper SHIHAN.

Commenting on this attack and criticism, Foreign Minister al-Kabariti said: "His excellency the Iraqi foreign minister is a friend whom we appreciate and respect. He knows very well that we derive our information about the Iraqi people's suffering from major sources, most important of whom are official Iraqi visitors. At any rate, we understand the position of the Iraqi officials who do not have a say in Iraq."

Al-Kabariti added: "Regarding Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih's statements about me, we, in Jordan, do not link trade and humanitarian relations to the political stand."

In this context, he recalled the Iraqi trade minister's stand when he previously visited Amman. The Iraqi minister stressed the need to invest in the Iraqi dinar, especially since this is an investment in pan-Arab Iraq, considering investment in the Iraqi dinar a pan-Arab action. However, two weeks after these statements, the Iraqi dinar was canceled, and thus, Jordanians paid the price for their pan-Arab stand.

Al-Kabariti said: The Iraqi regime's problem is credibility.

Jordan's al-Kabariti, Saudi Counterpart Exchange Viewpoints

JN3001170296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Within the framework of fraternal contacts between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, Saudi Foreign Minister His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al- Kabariti held a telephone conversation. They exchanged viewpoints on a number of regional issues and bilateral topics that were discussed during his highness's recent visit to Amman.

In another development, the Saudi finance minister will chair the Saudi delegation in the joint ministerial committee meetings between the two sisterly countries. The meetings will resume soon.

A new Saudi finance minister was appointed yesterday.

Reports of Jordanian Information Minister's Resignation Denied

JN3001125096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 30 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Official sources denied news agency reports citing a newspaper that Dr. Khalid al-Karaki, deputy prime minister and minister of information, tendered his resignation. The sources described recent reports to this effect as untrue.

Syria To Modify 1994 Water-Sharing Accord With Lebanon

NC3001151696 Paris AFP in English
1322 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Jan 30 (AFP)—Damascus has agreed to modify a 1994 accord and give Beirut a greater share of the waters of the al-'Asi (Orontos) River which rises in Lebanon to flow through Syria into Turkey, government sources said.

Lebanese Minister of Hydraulic Resources Ilyas Hubayqah was to hold talks Wednesday [31 January] with Syrian officials in Damascus, they said.

The 571 kilometer-long (353-mile) al-'Asi flows northward from Mount al-Hirmil in northeast Lebanon and into Syria until it ultimately reaches the Mediterranean through the Turkish territory of Antioch.

It has a total flow of 400 million cubic meters (14 billion cubic feet) between Lebanon and Syria. It runs through 30 kilometers (18 miles) of Lebanese territory before entering Syria where it completes most of its remaining journey.

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, despite opposition from some members of his government, gave into Lebanese wishes that the agreement be modified to give Lebanon more water, a government source told AFP.

On Monday Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri told reporters Lebanon had not rubber-stamped the September 1994 accord and that Hubayqah would go to Damascus to discuss the points of disagreement.

The 1994 accord stipulated that Lebanon would obtain 20 percent of the waters of the al-'Asi, or some 80 million cubic meters (2.8 billion cubic feet) of water annually.

But Lebanon wants to exclude from the water-sharing agreement the flow of some of the springs which feed the al-'Asi, namely the al- Labwah tributary which has a flow of 60 million cubic meters (2.1 billion cubic feet) annually.

Otherwise Lebanon would be set to lose 48 million cubic meters (1.6 billion cubic feet) of water each year, the government source said.

Lebanon also wants to ensure that rain waters and other sources of water that flow into the al-'Asi would be kept out the water-sharing agreement.

Including them would set a "precedent which Israel could exploit to its own advantage" when the time comes for the Jewish state to discuss sharing the region's precious water resources with Syria and Lebanon, the source said.

"It is in the interest of Syria and Lebanon therefore to modify in a more equitable manner the al-'Asi agreement in a bid to counter Israeli objectives," the source added.

Water-sharing is one of the thorniest issues at the center of the Middle East peace process, where Lebanon is considered the country most endowed with water.

Lebanon Denies Signing New Economic Agreements With Syria

MM3101090996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
30 Jan 96 pp 1,6

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has denied that the Higher Lebanese-Syrian Council has reached new economic and financial cooperation agreements between the two countries.

Al-Hariri's denial came in response to a campaign by opposition political forces against reports in yesterday's Lebanese newspapers alleging that cooperation agreements were signed at the Higher Council's meeting which dealt with boosting investments, removal of dual taxation, travel between the two countries, and the unified customs barrier. The virulent campaign was aimed at agreements thought to have been signed, accused the Lebanese Government and officials of relinquishing their role, and claimed that these agreements are not fair. Lebanese senior officials were surprised at the campaign, and have said that it was all about nothing, prompting Prime Minister al-Hariri to offer clarifications on the issue.

At an iftar [breaking of the fast during Ramadan] banquet held yesterday at sunset in his home for representatives of the unions, sports clubs, and scouts, and in response to a question on agreements at the Higher Council's meeting, especially in view of the fact that Presidents Ilyas al-Hirawi and Hafiz al-Asad were shown on television signing documents, he [al-Hariri] said: "Like you, I read about it today in the papers. However, I wish to stress that the Higher Council's standing orders require the two presidents to sign some routine matters, such as the general secretariat's budget, the suspension of accounts, and the general secretariat's organization. All these were signed. What you saw on television is only the two presidents signing these decisions."

He added: "Apart from that, everything that some newspapers and media organs talked about is irrelevant. If we wanted to sign an agreement with Syria or anyone else, we would not be shy or afraid to do so. Instead, we would do that quite openly, putting the country's and Lebanon's interest above anything else. No one can pretend to outdo us in our conviction or nationalism. This issue has caused a media uproar today. There has been a great deal of talk, including about the signing of some economic agreements. Yes, agreements are being prepared concerning how to avoid dual taxation between Lebanon and Syria. What does this mean? It means that a Lebanese businessman working in Syria will not have to pay taxes as long as he pays taxes in Lebanon. The same goes for the Syrian businessman in Lebanon. These are agreements that we have signed, or will sign, with some 20 states. We have signed them with France and Romania, and I believe also with Turkey and Egypt. We are now discussing them with Germany and Japan. We will visit Croatia next month to sign a similar agreement. So when we want to sign a similar agreement with Syria, why should we do so secretly, when it is in our interest?" He went on: "In effect, and this is no secret, it is Syria, and not us, which is still undecided in this matter. We have followed up on the drafts of the agreements for a long time and discussed them for quite a while with the Syrians. They are the ones who are undecided, because of the nature of their system. Our system is that of an open, free economy, and therefore Lebanon benefits from such agreements more than Syria would." He stressed that this issue was not discussed yesterday, saying that "it will be discussed by myself and the Syrian prime minister at a meeting to be held soon. In any case, these agreements will be proposed to the chamber of deputies and ratified publicly. If any journalist wants to consult the draft, it is available and not secret. It is in our interest, and we are proud of signing such agreements with a number of friendly states."

He said that "some newspapers mentioned the issues of the al-'Asi and Litani rivers, and I am surprised that they mention the Litani, because this issue was not discussed. This river rises in Lebanon and has its estuary in Lebanon, and therefore it has nothing to do with any talk or agreement between us and the Syrians or anyone else. With regard to the al-'Asi, there is an agreement, and so far the Lebanese side has not entirely agreed on it. The Syrian side has agreed on it, and we are still discussing it. The matter was raised during the negotiations, and it has been decided that the minister concerned will go with the experts to meet with the Syrian side in order to finalize discussions on this issue, bearing in mind that there is a signed agreement and that the Syrian side is in agreement with it, while we still have not agreed on some details requiring more discussion."

AL-HAYAH has learned from one of the participants in the Higher Council meetings that in fact it is a question of a report presented by Nasri Khuri, the Higher Council's secretary general, on his activities and the drafts that he was given to examine, including the draft agreements mentioned. Presidents al-Hirawi and al-Asad suggested postponing the discussion so that the drafts can be scrutinized by the joint coordination committee, comprising the prime ministers of both countries and the ministers concerned, and which will convene in Beirut after 'Id-al-Fitr [end of Ramadan].

With regard to the al-'Asi river issue, the report raised the issue of Lebanese demands concerning Lebanon's share of the al- Labwah spring water, to be dealt with separately from its allocation of the al-'Asi river waters, which would increase the Lebanese share. President al-Asad has agreed because of President al- Hirawi's insistence and despite opposition from other Syrian officials and their determination to consider Lebanon's share of the al-Labwah water as part of the agreed share from al-'Asi. Lebanese senior officials believe that al-Asad's positive reaction will increase Lebanon's share.

Meanwhile the chamber of deputies has continued discussing the 1996 general budget, and after 15 deputies spoke during a session lasting from 10 AM until about 3 PM, three more deputies spoke during a session which went on from 7 PM until very late. They are: Sa'ud Rofayil, Na'ilah Mu'awwad, Mahmud Tabu, Akram Shahib, 'Isam Ni'man and [former] Prime Minister 'Umar Karami.

Beirut Radio Reports on Speaker Birri's Invitation To Visit U.S.

NC3101063596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri has received two official invitations to visit the United States. The first invitation was received from Newt Gingrich, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the other from Benjamin Gilman, chairman of the House International Relations Committee.

Palestinian Fighters Reportedly Leave Lebanon for Self-Rule Areas

NC3001204596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] AFP has quoted Khalid al-Shayib, a Fatah official in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp, as saying that 76 Palestinian fighters left Lebanon to join the Palestinian police force in the West Bank and Gaza. Al-Shayib, however, did not disclose the date of their departure or how they will reach the self-rule areas.

AFP quoted Palestinian sources as saying that this is the first group of a total of 450 Palestinian fighters to leave Lebanon before 22 February.

Israeli Planes Attack Hizballah Posts in Iqlim al-Tuffah

NC3001135296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the first air attack on south Lebanon in 1996, Israeli warplanes raided Hizballah positions in Iqlim al-Tuffah at 1245 today.

Two planes fired six air-to-surface missiles at Jabal al-Rafi'. Columns of black smoke were seen rising from the targeted position but it was not immediately known if the air raid caused any casualties.

At 1400 Israeli warplanes fired four missiles at 'Ayn Bu Siwar and Jabal Safi.

Hizballah announced that its positions in Iqlim al-Tuffah were subjected to aerial bombardment by four Israeli warplanes at approximately 1245 today. It said that Hizballah members fired several SAM-7 missiles and directed other antiaircraft fire at the attacking planes.

Earlier today Israeli aircraft flew reconnaissance sorties over Sidon, Iqlim al-Tuffah, and al-Nabatiyah.

At dawn today the town of Bra'shit was the target of Israeli artillery fire from the Bra'shit hill.

Israeli Planes Attack Hizballah Targets, Report Good Hits

TA3001153496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, Air Force planes raided Hizballah targets in the Jabal Safi area north of the security zone in south Lebanon. The pilots returned safely and reported good hits.

News agencies report from al-Nabatiyah that two Israeli jet fighters fired six rockets at the village of Mlikh, which is used as a Hizballah base, and an hour later they again attacked the Jabal Safi hills adjacent to the village. Lebanese Army antiaircraft guns opened fire on the Israeli Air Force planes.

Lebanese 'Resistance' Wounds SLA Member in Response to Air Raids

NC3001175396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Enemy aircraft carried out a series of air raids today against Mlita, Jabal Safi, and al-Luwayzah. Several missiles were fired on these areas.

The Lebanese Army and the resistance forces confronted the attacking planes with antiaircraft fire.

The resistance retaliated against the Israeli aggression with an operation against an occupation forces' post in Bra'shit, wounding a member of the agent Lahd's army [South Lebanese Army, SLA].

The Israeli attacks extended to the outskirts of 'Ayn Bu Siwar in Iqlim al-Tuffah. The hostile planes flew at a very low altitude over this area drawing antiaircraft fire from Lebanese Army positions.

According to an officer in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL], the Israeli attacks also extended to the Irish contingent's position in Bra'shit. The UNIFIL officer said that only property damage was caused.

Israeli Shelling, Lebanese 'Resistance' Operation Reported

NC3001204496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in the south reported a short while ago that the Israeli occupation troops stationed in Tallat al-'Abbad and Jabal Humayyid are bombarding the villages of Kafra, Yatar, Haris, Haddatha, 'Ayta al- Jabal, and Sribbin with heavy artillery. So far, approximately 40 shells have landed on these villages. Enemy helicopters are taking part in the shelling and raking operations, using large-caliber machine guns. The shelling is still in progress, but no casualties have been reported.

In retaliation, the resistance fighters have attacked two occupation positions in Bra'shit and Haddatha with machine guns and rockets, causing grave damage to the two positions.

Amal Groups Attack Israeli Positions in South Lebanon

NC3101135596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Amal Movement announced today that one of its groups attacked an Israeli patrol near the al-Qantarah position at dawn today. Another group attacked the al-Qantarah position with rockets and machine guns.

In a statement, Amal announced that a third group attacked the Tallusah position, destroying a 12.7-mm machine-gun emplacement and killing or wounding the people manning the position. The Israeli artillery shelled nearby positions and villages.

Lebanese Judge Urges Death Penalty for Fugitive Palestinian

NC3001185596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Appeals Court Prosecutor Judge 'Adnan 'Abdun has submitted a brief on the assassination of [prominent Sunni cleric] Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi. He asked Investigating Judge 'Abdallah Bitar to hand down death sentences against 20 defendants in this case, foremost among whom is Ahmad al-Sa'di, alias Abu-Mihjan [Palestinian believed to be hiding in 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp near Sidon]. Judge 'Abdun ruled that three other suspects in the case need not face trial.

He referred the brief to the investigating judge to issue an indictment.

Lebanese Envoy Denies Knowledge of Arrest of Sudanese Nationals

NC3001210596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudanese Ambassador 'Uthman Dardiri has denied that he has received a legal writ from Lebanese Foreign Ministry Secretary General Zafir al-Hasan about four Sudanese nationals accused of training the assassins of Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi.

Dardiri declared that Sudan has not been notified that any Sudanese citizen has been arrested in connection with the above case.

Article Criticizes Lebanon's Silence on Smuggled Iranian Arms

NC3001234396 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 24 Jan 96 p 2

[Article by George Bashir: "Why Is There Secrecy Between Ankara and Tehran, and Why Is Beirut Ignoring the Arms Scandal?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What will the government say to the Chamber of Deputies and to the public concerning the scandal of arms and explosives that Iran was sending as a gift to Lebanon in the six trucks that the Turkish authorities seized?

Although international media published every detail about the scandal, the Beirut government remained silent, turning a blind eye and a deaf ear. Iranian envoys held intensive contacts with senior Turkish officials in an attempt to close the curtain on this scandal and to convince the Turks that Tehran will not again use Turkish territory, and the Turks' sovereignty and national dignity, to send Iranian gifts of arms, explosives, and destructive material to Lebanon without informing the Turks and obtaining their permission. This was not the first time, and perhaps will not be the last! The Beirut government is only watching this from a distance, as if it is not at all concerned. It felt satisfied with only sending a secret cable of inquiry.

Everyone knows that for a long time Lebanon has been a place for hundreds of Iranian revolutionary guards and other Iranian volunteers; they are in al-Biqa' and other Lebanese areas. These people did not descend on Lebanon from heaven. Their presence, so far, has been considered as just a powerless "legitimate presence", but it helps feed Lebanon with advanced revolutionary slogans and ideas and with developed plans that would enable the Lebanese to reach the year 2000 as more modern and more creative!

The scandal of the Iranian explosives and missiles that Iran was sending to Lebanon and that the Turks seized last week provided a chance for Lebanon to raise the issue of the ever-violated national sovereignty, especially with Iran. Is it not enough for the Lebanese Government and leaders that some Iranian officials continue to ignore the Lebanese authority when they make certain visits to Lebanon and deal with Lebanese sides and issues without saying hello to government officials? Indeed, these Iranian officials view the government in Lebanon as reactionary, colonialist, imperialist, and backward!

There is still a chance for senior government officials to open this file and to know the side that asked for all these weapons, explosives, and missiles from Iran — unless the arms were a gift from Iran to the Lebanese Army to help it impose state control all over Lebanon! And even if this was the case, certain procedures must be followed, and the Lebanese Government should not feel embarrassed because Lebanon needs support for its legitimate forces, especially the Army. Announcing that this is the case would remove the black spot that the scandal left in Lebanese-Iranian relations despite the Lebanese silence.

Syrian Commentary Views Resumption of Maryland Talks

JN3001154396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1238 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The Syrian-Israeli talks are continuing in Maryland. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Peace Process Coordinator Dennis Ross are expected to join the talks. Today's talks, just as the previous ones, will focus on security arrangements following the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. It is clear that there are gaps in the positions. Some Israelis speak about big gaps. These gaps are attributed to the Israeli side's evasion of the principle of security equitability [takafu'], and the setting of unfair and impossible conditions which Syria cannot accept.

While the Israeli prime minister expressed optimism, and called for not hastening to make frustrating definite judgments, taking into consideration that the new round of talks is still at its beginnings; and while the U.S. Administration has also expressed optimism due to the fact that the talks are serious and have dealt with substantive issues, some Israeli officials, particularly Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, used to make rigid and pessimistic statements. It is clear that there are some Israeli forces which push toward exaggerating the issue of security arrangements as if it is the major issue, and as if peace is not the substantive issue. Security arrangements should reinforce peace. Peace and security cannot be two poles apart. Peace is the basic guarantee of security, and there can be no security without peace. Peace is the base of stability, tranquility, and calm in the region. It is peace which secures the objective circumstances for a new atmosphere based on trust. By exaggerating and concentrating on the security arrangements, the forces which reject peace with Syria seek to divert attention from the substantive issue; namely, full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines. These forces used to link withdrawal to the nature of peace. They now seek to link it to security arrangements. As we said, they also exaggerate these issues. The practical outcome is to obstruct the aspired progress, taking into consideration that the principle of security equitability, on which Syria has agreed would, if accepted by Israel, facilitate the peace process and pave the way for a substantive progress on the Syrian track, which would also pave the way for a similar progress on the Lebanese track.

Awaiting the end of the current round of Maryland talks and the U.S. secretary of state's tour on 5 February, there is no choice but to stress that Syria aspires for peace and works for it. However, it will never deviate from the resolutions of international legitimacy, the bases of the Madrid conference, and the land-for-peace principle. It will never be dragged into anything which would violate its convictions, or undermine its rights to restore all its territories. The difficulties some Israeli try to create for the peace process will only result in delaying the achievements of this process and shattering the hopes of the region's states and the entire international community.

Syrian Irrigation Minister on Resolving Water Issues With Turkey

TA3101110696 Istanbul SHOW Television in Turkish 2030 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Interview with Syrian Irrigation Minister 'Abd-al-Rahman Madani by correspondent Mehmet Ali Birand in Damascus; date not given; from the "32d Day" program — recorded; Madani speaks in Arabic with superimposed translation into Turkish]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Madani] The GAP [Southeast Anatolia Project] project and the construction of the Birecik dam is tantamount to the irrigation of 80,000 dunams of land and the withholding of 1 million cubic meters of water. As of this year, you will irrigate 400,000 dunams of land in the Harran Plain. The water that reaches us will decrease, and as soon as agriculture begins, fertilizers and chemicals will be mixed into the water. The water will be polluted. In other words, not only will we have less water, but we will also be left with sewage water. We only reacted against this situation. We did not undertake any action against Turkey.

[Birand] Why did you suddenly begin to establish a front against Turkey? You are now convening a meeting of Arab countries. Declarations are being issued against Turkey. Are you adopting a front against us?

[Madani] No, we are not adopting a front. This recent statement merely constitutes a joint declaration of views by countries with similar interests. Our difficulty stems from you. You fail to consult with us, talk to us, or negotiate this matter. Moreover, President Suleyman Demirel had officially promised that the final phase would be finished in 1993. But, we have heard nothing.

[Birand] The Turkish public claims that this is Turkey's own water and it is up to Turkey to decide whether or not it wants to give it to someone else or share it with someone else. The Turkish public says: Do I ask for your oil? No, therefore, I should also be able to utilize my water as I please. What is your reaction to this?

[Madani] There are very important differences between water and oil. There is a cost to the drilling of oil.

Water is God given. Oil reserves are limited, but water is endless. Water is like life; one cannot live without it. Oil is only wealth, it cannot be drunk, and it does not give life. If there is no oil, one can find other sources of energy. Furthermore, God has willed that water be shared. You can renounce oil, but not water. Water is not the sole property of one country. There is a right to share it. This is what international agreements indicate. In other words, we are not asking for something that is not our right.

[Birand] On the one hand, you tell us that we are restricting the flow of the Euphrates River and not giving you sufficient water, but, on the other hand, you do the same thing. You build dams over the Asi River, stopping the flow of water to that region in Turkey.

[Madani] No, this is not correct. We are not decreasing the flow of the Asi River. There is no water this year, because we did not have rain. There is nothing we can do about this. The waters in the Asi River diminish whenever there is less rain. Even our small dams over this river are empty of water. The quantity of water flowing into Turkey, however, is greater than the amount we are using.

Afghanistan

IRNA Reports Resumption of Taleban-Government Talks

LD3001160396 Tehran IRNA in English 1503 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 30, IRNA — A four-member Afghan Government delegation resumed talks with Golboddin Hekmatyar's Islamic Party, Nangarhar Jihadi Council, Mowlavi Yunes Khales and unofficial representatives of Taleban group in Nangarhar, Jalalabad, since Monday [29 January].

An Afghan Government spokesman announced here Tuesday that A. R. Rasul Sayyaf, leader of Ettehad-e Eslami-ye party and an ally of Afghan Government is also to join the negotiators within the next two days.

The source said that the delegation has started intensive talks with all Jalalabad-based groups, adding that although a consensus has not been reached yet, the talks are progressing satisfactorily.

He added that there were exchange of visits between delegations representing afghan government and national islamic movement leader General 'Abdol Rashid Dostum in a bid to achieve more practical results out of their contacts.

The spokesman hoped for speedy settlement of disputes and preparation for realization of national reconciliation.

Afghan Official Criticizes U.S. Moves Against Iran

LD3001163896 Tehran IRNA in English 1509 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 30, IRNA — The Afghan Deputy Premier Mohammad 'Ali Javid on Tuesday [30 January] described the U.S. move to allocate budget for subversive actions against Iran as a symbol of the state terrorism.

Hojjatulah Javid, also chairman of the Afghanistan's Hezb-e Harakat-e Eslami (Islamic Movement Party) Central Council, told IRNA in Kabul that the Islamic system in Iran has been brought to power by the Iranian nation and U.S. efforts to overthrow it is quite undemocratic and unacceptable.

The Afghan deputy premier appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran's efforts to restore peace and stability to his war-torn country.

He referred to the common religious, cultural and regional bonds shared by the Afghan and Iranian nations, saying that the two nations have been subjected to the conspiracies of their enemies.

Javid termed the ongoing peace talks between the Afghan Government and opposition groups as successful and added that only the Taleban prefers war as a solution to the dispute.

Javid called lack of unity in the Afghan leadership as main source of difficulties in Afghanistan.

He reiterated the Afghan Government's firm stance on transfer of power according to a mechanism acceptable to all Afghan groups. He hoped that the opposition groups will cooperate with the Afghan Government in finding a lasting solution to the crisis in Afghanistan.

Afghan Security Commission Begins To Collect Weapons From Kabul

LD3001192296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security commission has begun to collect illegally carried weapons in Kabul.

A BAKHTAR correspondent reported that the officials of the security commission began their work this morning to collect weapons being carried illegally, to remove tinted plastic sheets from motor vehicles' windows, and to control traffic. During the day, officials seized 20 Kalashnikovs and one PK and removed tinted plastic film from the windows of 135 motor vehicles, fixed there without license.

Lieutenant General Qarabeg Ezedyar, deputy head of the commission, said to the BAKHTAR correspondent that the work of the commission was continuing and all those who had weapons in their possession were asked to have the permit with them when carrying the weapon.

Commentary Says Taleban Attacks Prove 'Hostility' to Muslims

LD3001215196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Commentary by BAKHTAR's political commentator]

[FBIS Translated Text] In firing a barrage of rockets and bombarding the residential areas of Kabul city during the sacred fasting month of Ramadan, the Taleban group have proven their animosity against Islam and Muslims.

BAKHTAR's political commentator says the following in this respect:

The resumption of rocket fire on the residential areas of Kabul by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban is (?open) hostility against Muslims. [Words indistinct]

The Taleban group has been continuing the massacre of innocent people in Kabul for the last two years.

These massacres have brought no military or political gain for the Taleban group so far. Their action cannot be interpreted in any way but as animosity against the people. They do not want to see people in comfort even for a moment when performing their religious rituals. For this reason they have closed supply routes just before the arrival of the sacred fasting month of Ramadan. This wish of theirs was not fulfilled, as a result of actions taken by the government and some other groups. The Taleban group has embarked on killing the people when the government has declared a unilateral temporary cease-fire in the country, giving no excuse for the continuation of the fighting and killing of the civilian population. [Words indistinct]

The UN Security Council has vigorously condemned this action of the Taleban group; and the UN secretary general's envoy regarded rocket attacks against the people of Kabul as an inhumane and anti- Islamic action. He has asked the Taleban's leaders to end these actions.

Reports say that Pakistan's foreign minister recently said to Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, [UN secretary general's special envoy to Afghanistan], that Pakistan was planning to remove the Taleban group from the areas around Kabul because their rocket attacks have defamed Pakistan.

The Taleban group should know that even their masters have come to the conclusion that military victory cannot be gained by killing the people. Despite the fact that Benazir's government has encouraged the Taleban to embark on such actions, at the end, because of the undesirable consequences, it has decided to leave its own group alone to be burned in the fire of retaliation. Thus Almighty God is punishing this butcher group for the killing of Kabul's Muslims.

Taleban, Kabul Garrison in New Artillery Exchanges

LD3101115796 Tehran IRNA in English
1119 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 31, IRNA — The two warring factions in Afghanistan, the Afghan government and the Taleban militiamen, shelled each others' positions for the second consecutive day on Wednesday. Spokesman of the Afghan Defense Ministry, 'Amrollah, said on Wednesday that the Taleban opened fire first and the Afghan government troops replied their shelling of capital accordingly.

According to the spokesman, whenever the U.N. special envoy on Afghanistan, Mahmoud Mestiri, has initiated a new peace plan the Taleban militiamen in order to gain more points have intensified their fire on Afghan capital of Kabul. He added that exchange of fire at Maydan Shahr, Chahar Asiab and Rish Khvor regions was heavier comparing to the other regions. Mahmoud Mestiri arrived in Kabul on Tuesday and during his brief stay here conferred with a senior Afghan military commander, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud.

Afghan Government Closes Foreign Currency Markets

LD3001145096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign currency exchange markets in Kabul have been closed down. Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom say that the Kabul administration's Ministry of Internal Affairs has ordered the closing down of the currency exchange markets in Kabul City. The reports add [words indistinct] two currency exchange markets, Sarai-e Shahzadah and Sarai-e Naw, have been closed down by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The currency dealers at the markets were told to close down their shops in an effort to bring down the value of the dollar. [Words indistinct]

Bangladesh

Security Tightened After Shooting at UK Envoy Residence in Dhaka

BK3101023896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network
in English 0200 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security has been tightened to ensure safety of foreign diplomats based in Dhaka. Police said steps have been taken following several gunshots fired at the residence of the British deputy high commissioner at Gulshan in Dhaka yesterday. The police constable who was in sentry duty at the gate of the diplomat's residence was injured when unidentified gunmen fired several shots at the residence. Police said a case has been filed with the Gulshan Police Station and the matter is under investigation.

Finance Minister Views Economic Situation in Bangladesh

BK3101075196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network
in English 0200 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Finance Minister Saifur Rahman has said the economy of the country is on the right track despite adverse political situation. He said this at a review meeting on the economic performance of Bangladesh with the Aid Group comprising the donor countries and agencies in Dhaka yesterday. The finance minister said all macroeconomic fundamentals are on the right direction in spite of the recent decline in the foreign exchange reserves due to the increased imports, particularly foodgrains.

Mr. Saifur Rahman said due to poor crop output, the country had to import 16 lakh tons of foodgrains during the last one year and that the situation aggravated due to increased food price in the international market. The finance minister told the review meeting that during the first six months of the current fiscal year Bangladesh's exports registered a growth of 11 percent. Mr. Saifur Rahman reiterated that the government was fully committed to privatization and reform of the food sector and the railways. The finance minister said less priority projects are under scrutiny of the government and funds are being diverted from less priority projects to priority projects.

Representatives of the World Bank, the IMF, the Asian Development Bank, UNDP [United Nations Development Program], UNICEF, World Food Program, and the envoys of Japan, USA, UK, the Netherlands, and Denmark took part in the discussion.

Strike Called by Opposition Observed 'Peacefully' in Dhaka

BK2901154296 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The eight-hour strike called by major opposition parties beginning at 0600 this morning passed peacefully. Despite picketing by the supporters of opposition parties, a large number of rickshaws have been seen plying the streets in the city since the morning. Automobiles — especially private cars and buses — were off the roads, but traffic became normal as half of the strike passed. Attendance at government, semigovernment, and autonomous bodies was normal and business establishments and banks were open. Airport sources said that all flights operated as usual, although some domestic flights were delayed due to the strike and others were rescheduled. Railway sources said that trains operated as usual. There was no disruption in normal water traffic.

Meanwhile, the strike was observed peacefully in the port city of Khulna. No untoward incident was reported during the strike.

Commissioner Expresses Inability To Cancel Bangladesh Elections

BK3001064496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chief Election Commissioner Mr. Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has expressed his inability to cancel the forthcoming parliamentary elections. In his letter addressed to general secretary of Bangladesh Awami League, Mr. Zillur Rahman, Mr. Sadeque said there will be a constitutional crisis if the elections are not held in the stipulated time. He also mentioned various steps already taken by the Election Commission for conducting the polls in a free, fair, and impartial manner. The letter was sent on Sunday, but the Awami League office refused to receive it.

The chief election commissioner said the commission was constitutionally obliged to hold the elections for the sixth Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] within 90 days after the assembly was dissolved by the president on 24th November last year. So the elections must be held by 21st February this year. Justice Sadeque said it was mandatory to adhere to the provisions of the Constitution and as a constitutional body, the Election Commission could not violate constitutional provisions. He further said any citizen of the country or even a worker of the Awami League could initiate case in the supreme judicial council against the Election Commission if elections were not held within stipulated time.

The chief election commissioner noted that it was essential to hold the elections to maintain democratic process in the country. Otherwise, he said the march of democracy might be retarded. He referred to other letters sent by Mr. Zillur Rahman on various issues and said many of the constructive opinions and suggestions in his letters were implemented and as a result the activities of the Election Commission were further strengthened. Earlier, the Awami League general secretary in his letter of the 20th of this month addressed to Justice Sadeque demanded cancellation of the schedule for parliamentary elections.

Election Commission Spurns Report on Army Role in Bangladesh Elections

BK2901140696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Election Commission has termed as totally false, fabricated, and baseless a report published in a local daily today that the Army has expressed its inability to fulfill its responsibility in the upcoming parliamentary elections and has asked to end the joint arms recovery drive by 31 January.

A news release issued by the commission in Dhaka today said the Election Commission feels the report was published deliberately to create confusion among the Army, various law and order enforcement forces and bodies, and personnel engaged in conducting the elections. The news release said the Election Commission deployed the armed forces to assist the civil administration in maintaining a conducive law and order situation in the postelection period and during the voting and to carry out the drive to recover illegal weapons as requested by various political parties. The Election Commission did not take the step on the instructions of the government or any particular political party.

The commission said that the Army and law enforcement organizations have already carried out the drive successfully, recovering a huge quantity of weapons. They have also succeeded in detaining a large number of convicted or sentenced criminals. As a result, the law and order situation throughout the country has significantly improved. The news release added that the Army's [word indistinct] drive to maintain law and order and recover illegal arms to ensure free, fair, and impartial elections in the country will continue until two days after the elections. There is no plan to stop the drive before then. The Commission also appealed to all those concerned to refrain, in the national interest, from publishing such fictitious and baseless reports that [words indistinct] might create confusion among the people.

41 Parties, Alliances in Bangladesh Election Contest

BK2901032396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Forty-one parties and alliances are in the race for the coming parliament elections. Of them, 10 parties and alliances have fielded candidates in 30 and more seats.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP, is contesting in all the 300 seats. Its election symbol is the sheaf of paddy. The other parties having 30 or more candidates are: Seven Party Alliance — 98, and its symbol is bus; Freedom Party-Faruq — 66, axe; Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon — 64, banyan tree; National Democratic Alliance — 50, star; Bangladesh Muslim League-Jamir Ali — 38, hurricane lamp; National Democratic Party — 35, tiger; Progotishil Ganotantrik Shakti, PROGASH, — 34, spade; Janodal — 31, date tree; and Jatiya Nagorik Sanghati — 30, and its symbol is rose. The symbol of other 31 parties and alliances have already been reported.

India

Indian Sources Report 'Intensification' in Pakistani Border Firing

BK3001161596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to defense sources, there has been an intensification in firing by Pakistani troops across the Line of Control in the Akhnur sector [in Kashmir] since the 19th of this month.

Meanwhile, a correspondent reports from Srinagar that Pakistan today resorted to unprovoked firing in the Chicken Neck sector area of the border, killing one civilian. According to BSF [Border Security Force] officials, the firing was intended to obstruct India from completing the border fencing.

Meanwhile, four intruders into Indian territory were killed in the Samba sector last night. The BSF also intercepted 14 Bangladeshi nationals in the R.S. Pura sector and 18 more in Samba sector.

A flag meeting was today held between the BSF and the Pakistani Rangers to end the border clashes.

Indian Radio: Anti-Pakistan Protests Held in Kashmir Border Villages

BK3101054396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, anti-Pakistan demonstrations were held in several villages in (Mulu) sector of the India-Pakistan international border. The demonstrators were demanding effective security measures to curb the unprovoked heavy firing by Pakistani troops every night since the 18th of this month in the area in which one civilian was killed on Monday. The AIR Jammu correspondent, who visited some of the affected villages in the sector yesterday, reports that many houses in these villages are (?top marked) by the Pakistani firing using heavy and light machine guns.

The Punjab police has decided to adopt a counter strategy in coordination with central agencies to fight the mounting threat of narcoterrorism being encouraged from across the border. Addressing a press conference at Chandigarh, the state police chief, Mr. O.P. Sharma, said anti-terrorist operations are being intensified in view of the coming general elections.

Indian Spokesman: No Firing by Pakistani Troops on Borders

BK3101085596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, for the first time in 12 days, there was no firing by Pakistani troops in the (Maulu) sector at the India-Pakistan international border last night. The firing had been continuing every night since the 18th of this month. A BSF [Border Security Force] spokesman said that security forces are maintaining a constant vigil along the border and keeping a watch over the situation. A flag meeting between the local commanders of the BSF and Pakistani rangers was held at the BSF post in

Ranbirsinghpura sector yesterday. The spokesman said that it was conveyed to the Pakistani officers that while India remains committed to erecting a border fence, there was no construction activity as yet in the (Maulu) sector.

AIR Jammu correspondent Ajit Singh who visited some of the villages in the (Maulu) sector reports that anti-Pakistan demonstrations were held at several places yesterday. The people demanded effective measures to curb unprovoked heavy firing by Pakistani troops. The Jammu and Kashmir government has announced an ex-gratia relief of 1 lakh rupees for the family of the civilians killed in the village Mahantadupatti due to Pakistani firing on Monday night.

Indian Spokesman Accuses Pakistan of Creating Tension

BK3001145296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has termed the sustained firing by Pakistani troops across the Line of Control in the past few days as a deliberate attempt to build up tension between the two countries. In a statement in New Delhi today, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said: India is exercising restraint in responding to the situation.

The spokesman also denied Pakistan's allegation that India was responsible for a rocket attack on a mosque in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The statement said India will never resort to an action as despicable as targeting innocent people offering namaz [prayer] in a mosque.

Indian Commentary Views Unprovoked Firing by Pakistan

BK3101073496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Commentary by Ajit Singh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For no rhyme or reason, Pakistani troops have created a real nightmare for the civilian population of about a dozen Indian villages in the (Mulu) sector of India-Pakistan international border in Jammu and Kashmir for the last 14 days. The exchange of firing between Pakistani and Indian troops have been a routine matter in several areas for a number of years along the Line of Control. It is for the first time since the 1971 war that any area on the international border has also seen such a heavy and prolonged firing by the Pakistani troops as in the (Mulu) sector. The flag meeting between the local commanders of the BSF [Border Security Force] and the Pakistani Rangers held yesterday at the (Octra) post also ended in a deadlock. The Pakistanis insisted that they will not allow any erection of the border fencing in the area. The BSF officers made it clear that while India remains committed to erect the border fence, the project is not being presently constructed.

No doubt, the real aim of the Pakistani firing is something different. Pakistani troops have been trying hard to push the groups of trained militants into the Indian territory. There have been several abortive attempts. In the last 15 days, 22 intruders were killed in different encounters with the BSF. Sophisticated weapons and RDX explosives were recovered. With the closure of high mountain passes due to heavy snow in Kashmir valley, Pakistan is trying to push in the militants through the Jammu region. Intelligence reports say that about 5,000 militants are waiting in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir [POK] to be pushed into India. Indian security forces have tightened the security all along the border. It is common knowledge that militants have to wait for several days in border villages of Pakistan till Pakistani troops find opportune time and place for their infiltration into India. They are lodged in the mosques at some places. The killing of 20 persons due to an explosion in a mosque in the border village called Forward Kahuta in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on the 26th of this month could be the result of accidental explosion in the stockpile of explosives kept by some militant groups waiting to infiltrate. There are also reports of increasing clashes between the Afghan mercenaries and the local Kashmiri militants in POK. The explosion could also be part of the ongoing rivalry between the militant groups.

The Pakistani allegation that Indian troops fired rockets on the village has no basis. It is the Pakistani troops which in the last one year had fired about 500 rockets on Indian border villages, but they failed to terrorize people and incite militancy in these areas. Border fencing in Punjab helped contain Pakistan-sponsored militancy in a big way. The fence must also come up in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan knows that it would be the end of its game plan to help the militants. What India does in its own territory should be of no concern to Pakistan. Pakistan's firing in (Mulu) sector is indicative of its ulterior motives only.

India: Brazilian President Backs UN Security Council Membership

PY2601215596 Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 25 Jan 96 Section 1 p 10

[FBIS Translated Text] President Fernando Henrique Cardoso supported India's aspiration of joining the UN Security Council, but at the same time he was discreet regarding the Brazilian wish for that position, which is being pursued with obsession by the Brazilian Foreign Ministry.

The president's cautiousness is meant to avoid discomfort in Latin America, especially with Mexico, which is also interested in the position.

"We do not have hegemonic aspirations," Cardoso stressed. According to him, India and Brazil agree that the United Nations should be reformed in order to increase its representativity. Such reforms include the expansion of the UN Security Council.

Behind this project the concept is that with the end of the Cold War only one world power has emerged, giving value to what are called "whale countries" — those countries that are leaders in their regions: Brazil in South America, South Africa in the sub- Saharan region, India in South Asia, and so forth.

Peace in the world would depend in part on an agreement among the "whales" which would give the United Nations greater strength in peace keeping operations.

This subject, however, is only an intention, since it involves complex regional conflicts, but it outlines Brazilian diplomacy, geared toward increasing its dialogue with countries having profiles like those of India and the PRC — large territories with a large population facing the challenge of globalization and poverty.

Despite the effort of the diplomats to show agreements with India, the visit is essentially symbolic, to mark a rapprochement with one of the "whale countries" which possesses a promising market capable of absorbing imports or of contracting services (for example, engineering services).

The trip ends a disagreement: Since Indira Gandhi's visit to Brazil at the beginning of the military regime, no Brazilian president has visited India.

Sharma Calls For Strengthening Ties With Brazil

BK2601160896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president has stressed the need for greater people-to-people contact between India and Brazil for a better future. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma said the economic reforms program in India has opened up new avenues of interaction and strengthening of cooperation. He was speaking at a banquet hosted in honor of the visiting Brazilian president, Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House] this evening. He said the present movement in history offers great prospects for attaining global stability, security, and prosperity for the people of the world. New Delhi and Brazil have worked together for promoting South-South cooperation within the G-15 framework and both the countries share similarity in their outlook on issues of global concern. Dr. Sharma said the visit of Mr. Cardoso will further strengthen bilateral relations.

Brazil's Cardoso Addresses Indian Businessmen on Recession

PY3001133096 Sao Paulo AGENCIA ESTADO in Portuguese 1346 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Report by Cristiana Lobo]

[FBIS Translated Text] New Dehli, 27 Jan (AE) — Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso stated here today that Brazil must overcome recession and criticized the IMF. Cardoso contended that the IMF has been unable to show the way for developing countries to achieve economic stability without going through a recession. Addressing Indian entrepreneurs, Cardoso said: "We have to rediscover a growth pattern. Recession has provoked not only poverty, but extreme poverty in Brazil."

Cardoso began his speech by making a complete review of the Brazilian economic situation, highlighting the Real Plan and the economic opening process. He said: "I still believe we have not yet achieved a complete victory against inflation." He estimated that inflation will stand at 15 percent this year and economic growth at between 4.5 and 5 percent. Annual inflation in India stood at 7 percent in 1995 as a result of a process of reforms that has been implemented since 1991, when inflation stood at 18 percent annually.

Commenting on economic opening, Cardoso mentioned his predecessors Fernando Collor and Itamar Franco. He served as finance minister in the Franco administration during the formulation of the Real Plan.

Cardoso also emphasized the need to promote social security reform (India has no social security system) and noted that he had already raised the issue with all of the other Latin American presidents, who are facing the same problems. He said: "Yet, in Brazil, we are already moving in the right direction because the unions have understood that, without a change, the system will go bankrupt."

Cardoso advocated the need to complete the deindexation process of the Brazilian economy, but admitted that this would require a change in the people's approach. He said: "We have to act pedagogically and teach the people, although they are already beginning to understand." On 26 January, Cardoso virtually ruled out the possibility of increasing the minimum wage in May by noting that there has been no loss in the purchasing power of wages. He added: "We cannot effect changes without a great deal of information." He also told the

Indian entrepreneurs that for a long time Brazil had underwent a high inflationary process "that was like some kind of opium" because it gave money depositors the illusion that they were making a profit.

Rao, Brazil's Cardoso Sign Joint Declaration, Accords

PY2901170696 Sao Paulo AGENCIA ESTADO in Portuguese 1449 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Report by Cristiana Lobo]

[FBIS Translated Text] New Delhi, 27 Jan (AE) — Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao today signed a joint declaration whereby Brazil and India assume their candidacies for seats on the UN Security Council [UNSC]. The document also advocates the need to reorganize the United Nations and reiterates that both countries are committed to achieving nuclear disarmament.

In the declaration, the two countries propose multilateral negotiations for a disarmament program to eliminate nuclear weapons. Brazil and India also state their willingness to work to complete the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] which, in accordance with the declaration, must be part of a program geared toward eliminating all kinds of nuclear weapons. The declaration says: "There should no loopholes through which nuclearized states may continue to develop and refine their arsenals."

Before assuming their candidacies to UNSC seats, Brazil and India have called for a reorganization of the United Nations "in order to guarantee a more just, democratic international order." The declaration notes the 50th anniversary of the United Nations and emphasizes the need for it "to adapt to new global realities." Brazil and India note that developing countries account for a large majority within the UNGA and thus, "they should be fully represented as permanent members."

The declaration says: "It is believed that the presence as permanent members on a restructured UNSC of developing countries such as Brazil and India — which have effectively established their presence in the world and have the ability to act worldwide — will be a positive factor in promoting efforts for building a more peaceful, just, and fair international order, and will make the UNSC more representative, effective, and legitimate."

The Brazilian and Indian foreign policies are rarely inclined to sign joint declarations on political issues. The two countries have decided to sign one this time to put greater emphasis on their agreements, especially regarding their support for making changes in the United Nations and the nuclear issue.

Brazil and India have outlined the challenges lying ahead: Economic and social development; the eradication of poverty; the eradication of illiteracy, preservation of the environment, and the elimination of the scourge of terrorism. They have also reaffirmed their commitment to oppose protectionism and to promote international trade. They call upon developed countries to make their markets more accessible to other countries' products and voice concern "about attempts to introduce new conditions and restrictions on the basis of environmental protection, technical standards, and international labor requirements."

They also state their belief that governments are increasingly aware that economic reforms and the integration of the world economy are necessary factors for progress and development. They warn, however, that the world is still not free of either tensions or violence. The declaration says: "New challenges that threaten security and stability are emerging." The declaration adds that the growing threats posed by aggressive nationalist forces, extremism, and by terrorism need to be addressed.

Brazil and India have signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation for the use of nuclear energy in the areas of research on the use of thorium as fuel, nuclear safety, radiological protection, nuclear medicine, sterilization of food, and use of nuclear techniques in agriculture and manufacturing of heavy equipment.

Contrary to what was reported earlier, the memorandum was signed by the National Nuclear Energy Commission (CNEN) for Brazil, and by the Atomic Energy Commission for India, rather than by the respective heads of state. The reason for this stemmed from a leak on the signing of the agreement.

Brazil and India also signed agreements on the agenda for scientific and technological cooperation, a common agenda for the environment, and another on a framework for the creation of the Indian-Brazilian Trade Council.

India: Brazil's Cardoso Urges War on Poverty

PY3001133796 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 28 Jan 96 p A9

[Report by Cristiana Lobo]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New Delhi — [passage omitted] Commenting on the joint declaration signed with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso said: "Now that the cold war is over, we must wage war on poverty." Cardoso believes the United Nations must now seek to promote socioeconomic development, eradicate poverty, and encourage tolerance among countries.

After meeting with Indian entrepreneurs, Cardoso gave a lecture at the Indian Center for International Studies in his last engagement in India. He analyzed the consequences of economic globalization and proposed a debate on what he described as "ethics of solidarity."

Cardoso said: "The challenge lying ahead of us is that of completing the transition stage in which we should recognize that we are facing global problems and that by the next stage we ought to have created specific instruments and promoted mobilization to effect changes."

Cardoso believes that the "ethics of solidarity" should be instrumental in making cooperation among development countries part of the international agenda in order "to fight indifference toward marginalization, exclusion, hunger, and disease, which are at the root of issues such as emigration and violence.

Brazilian President Departs Delhi; Nuclear Research Pact Signed

BK2801115096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Brazil are to cooperate in nuclear research and several other fields. Two sides signed five agreements, including a joint declaration, at the end of talks between President Cardoso of Brazil and the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, in New Delhi today. Both the countries will set up a joint commission to expand commercial and trade relations. Besides strengthening economic cooperation, they will also cooperate in numerous areas, including science and technology, infrastructure development, railways, hydroelectric power, agriculture, and health. The agreements signed also included formation of Indo-Brazilian Commercial Council and a common agenda on environment.

President Cardoso, who left New Delhi for Barcelona at the end of his four-day visit, also addressed the captains of Indian industry and business. He said Brazil wants to use India as a gateway to Asian markets.

Indian BJP Reportedly 'Badly Shaken' by Hawala Case

BK2601155796 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 25 Jan 96 p 10

[Article by Praful Bidwai: "Political Economy of Hawala Elite Apathy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THREE entirely different reactions to the disclosures in the hawala [illegal money laundering] case are already discernible. First, the managers and leaders of the political system are badly rattled. As far as the Congress is concerned, the unbelievable has happened. The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation], of all agencies, has actually charge sheeted three Cabinet ministers on specific counts, after examining 393 witnesses and scrutinizing 489 documents. Suddenly, the normal, customary financial transactions that lubricate politics have become a public scandal. The rules of the game have been broken. Someone reneged on the shared understanding or code that when you pay bribes, you at best talk about them, you don't write your accounts in diaries.

BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Cornered

For all its bluster, and Mr L.K. Advani's posturing, the BJP too has been badly shaken. Its "party with a difference" platform has collapsed. From now on, venality will stick to the BJP as easily as it does to the Congress. No one is going to forget in a hurry either the VHP [Vishura Hindu Parishad]-BJP's decade-old international drive to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars, and or the local VHP's income tax troubles: The party feels cornered by Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao. But the anti-Rao sentiment is as widespread in the Congress as in the Opposition. It is based on the perception that someone, somewhere, has upset the political applecart, deviously using the Supreme Court's insistence on full disclosure and action in a public interest litigation. Many politicians are irked at the CBI's gross interference in the working of the system they run and regard as part of life.

The second reaction, that of the bulk of the policy-shaping elite and metropolitan intelligentsia, is different. They are not as defensive about the hawala as politicians. Some term the disclosures as "gimmicks". But they accept hawala a part of life. It has, after all, long bee around. Some of them have used it in reverse to transfer funds to their children studying abroad. The don't feel a sense of moral out rag at what has happened. Indeed, the elite's moral temperature is down to zero. Instead, it is speculating wildly on the motives behind the CBI inquiries and the decision to pursue some in the list of 115. The most morbidly curious are trying to analyse whether Mr Rao will succeed in his super-Machiavellian manoeuvres or not.

At another end of the same spectrum, there is sullen resignation: politicians will be politicians, these things happen, ultimately no one will go to jail, corruption is an integral part of political life; politicians are the scum of this society... There is cold deliberation, no anger, in this condemnation.

The third reaction is that of ordinary people. As far as one can read it, it is one of shock, anger, consternation, outrage, even disgust. It is not a know-all reaction. Machiavellian tactics apart, people feel it is vital that there is solid documentation of the politics-money-crime nexus which is poisoning the system. That documentation opens up the possibility that the powerful could be punished — something that has proved unachievable for centuries, even under democracy. For our plebian classes it is a vindication of their faith in the notion and possibility of justice that the CBI should at all have pursued the hawala case, albeit at the Supreme Court's goading, that it should have been compelled to press charges and take further action. Although the three Cabinet ministers took a leisurely 24 hours to resign even after being charge sheeted by the country's prime investigating police, their demission is a victory for the cause of public accountability, transparency and probity in public life, and of liberating democracy from money power.

The three reactions correspond to very different views of democracy. For the political class, democracy is a sub-set of manipulative politics in which money power and patronage are not illegitimate. For the social elite, democracy is only a system of power, in which its own interests must never be sufficiently threatened by those in whose name the government rules. For the people democracy is, and should be, what it means: rule of the people based or universal political equality and non discrimination, or equal stake for everyone in the working of the system.

A Tussle

At the centre of the political scenario today is a tussle between the third view, on the one hand, and the first two views, on the other. It is equally pertinent to see corruption, especially in high places, a political rent-taking at the expense of democracy, democracy as the rut of the people. If politics is the shadow of power over society, the corruption is the shadow of money over politics. The alliance between the political class — rather, the bulk of it at the Centre-Right—and the socially, economically dominant elite is cemented through an agreement to limit the freedoms permissible under democracy. It is being challenged from the periphery, often in an erratic fashion, halting at times through unlikely institutions, but challenged nevertheless. The battle is for the soul of Indian democracy as well as public morale.

The elite alliance takes an increasingly cynical view of the system it dominates. It is not appalled that he government violates its own vies—in recruitment and extension, allotment of houses, floating (telecom) tenders and awarding on tracts. It is not shocked that the finance minister, no less, not only sits in the Rajya Sabha as a representative of Assam, where he falsely claims to be "ordinarily resident", but when challenged by the Election Commission to prove his claim, procures back-dated rent receipts and even a ration card with a Dispur address care of Mrs Hemaprabha Saikia, the wife of the state chief minister. There is no outrage when the Guwahati high court passes a judgment exonerating him, saying that "the holder of a declared office" need not be asked to produce proof of residence, his mere say-so is enough — something that returns jurisprudence to the Middle Ages when it was unnecessary to scrutinise the nobility's statements for their veracity; the truth is what it said.

Inured Elite

Evidently, our elite has become totally inured to deception, cheating, outright lying. It practises it in its own life. We have created a system where no one can buy a flat without paying black money: fulfilment of elementary needs often involves sailing close to the wind untruthfulness, deception, illegality.

In this fundamental sense there is a profound crisis, if not collapse, of moral leadership in this society. This is an alarming situation and calls for drastic remedies. It demands that we institute, extending the logic of Sri Lanka's Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption Act, 1994, automatic sanction for the prosecution of all public servants on non-frivolous charges of corruption and abuse of office, urgently enact the Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta Bills; institute public hearings on major policies; and appoint citizens' committees to scrutinise big contacts and tenders. After what we have seen, from Bofors, through the securities scam to telecom, it may be no longer valid to keep policy-making above judicial or popular scrutiny. But the first step must be to appoint a special court on the hawala case itself, which will award exemplary punishment to the corrupt and inaugurate systemic cleansing. Failure to do so could lead to a collapse of the system's democratic legitimacy itself. And that is too high a price to pay to protect our rent-seeking elite against the people.

Iran

Iranian Commentary Calls Egyptian Cleric's Sentence 'Two-Faced'

NC3101021496 Tehran SALAM in Persian 20 Jan 96 p 12

[Commentary by M. Veysi: "Justice—American Style!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a provincial court in New York, the United States has finally issued the verdict on the prominent Egyptian cleric Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman and nine of his Muslim followers after a trial lasting for some months on charges of "plotting the overthrow of the U.S. Government" and "initiating a terrorist urban civil war." He has been sentenced to life in prison and a prolonged prison term [as published]. The main aim of this sentence was to elicit the satisfaction of the Zionist regime and the Mubarak government.

This was done regardless of the fact that most of the most important prerequisites and principles for a just trial were not followed and psychological pressure and extensive propaganda within the administration and from abroad were exerted on Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman and his associates. Their request for some Muslim experts to attend was not granted and the court's verdict was based solely on the testimony of a criminal whose lies were previously documented in U.S. courts.

This trial can be considered another indication of the dissimulation and two-faced attitude of the Washington administration regarding their most basic claims of human rights and democracy.

The U.S. court's sentence against Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman and his associates has given rise to two questions for world public opinion. First, if the "plot to overthrow the U.S. Government"—something that was unconfirmed and based solely on the statement of a criminal—is considered a crime and an innocent combatant cleric and his associates are thrown into prison, why is it that the U.S. officials' official statements on "the need to overthrow the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran" and even the allocation of $20 million should not be considered the same crime? Why should the Washington officials not be tried for it? Have the U.S. officials not publicly proclaimed this illegal action themselves and even insisted on it? If this is not so, U.S. leaders should answer to the people of the world what the difference is between the efforts to topple the U.S. Government and the Iranian Government. Or is "condemnation" more important in their opinion than "admitting to a similar crime?"

Second, if it is an offense to initiate an urban terrorist war and its perpetrators are to be punished (and this is how it should be regardless of the correctness or incorrectness of its application to the Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman case) and such charges deserve sentences of life imprisonment, even of innocent people, why are the U.S. leaders frequently inviting representatives of terrorist organizations such as the Monafeqin ["hypocrites," pejorative term for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization]—whose hands are stained with the blood of scores of innocent Iranian officials and people, to their parliamentary gatherings? And why do they not impose any restrictions on their free movement on their territory?

This only means that these are American-style judgments by a U.S. tribunal!

Editorial Analyzes U.S.'s 'Defeat' in Confronting Iran

NC3001175996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 21 Jan 96 p 1

[Editorial: "The Secret of Washington's Failures"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "America cannot upset the internal situation in Iran without catastrophically plunging the Persian Gulf into a crisis." Stating this at a seminar held recently in San Francisco, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger continued: "The nature of Iran's ruling system is more complicated than traditional and classic analysts portray it to be."

Kissinger's remarks were apparently a tacit reply to a political analysis by Amos Perlmuter [name as published], a political science lecturer at American University, on the need to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was published in the WASHINGTON TIMES.

In his analysis, Perlmuter advised American decisionmakers to invest in a psychological war and to encourage intellectual operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said the mass media, under Washington's orders, should follow the policy of a political-psychological war against Iran and feign that the intention is to create a "free Iran."

This is not the first time that American university circles have examined ways to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran and political scientists have prepared special reports on this. But, at the same time, Kissinger admits that the issue is more complicated than what traditional analysts portray it to be. Why, after 17 years of enmity and confrontation with the Iranian nation, has Washington not learned how to confront Iran?

Kissinger is, at any rate, a veteran Zionist who is overtly hostile toward the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic nation of Iran. He has a record of persistent enmity with Muslim nations and especially the Iranian nation. But, at the same time, he believes that the issue is not as simple as is portrayed by a number of amateur lecturers on political science.

Perlmuter's analysis of Iranian affairs is nothing but a repetition of what has already been said a hundred times over. Before him others also talked about Iran and received money from the CIA to publish similar comments on Iran. And apart from copying repetitive advice and the sickening accusations made by America, he has not offered anything else and has nothing new to say.

He says: Iran is an enemy and a terrorist, it is dangerous, it wants to destroy civilization, and we should fight it. He adds that the allocation of a $20-million fund for this confrontation is very necessary. He then uses extremely sly words to haggle over the price and says the amount allocated is minimal. He also says: Give this money to us so that we can use it in a psychological war and in intellectual operations against Iran!

Perlmuter also tacitly and roguishly accuses the CIA of being illiterate and of lacking profound knowledge, implying to the American decisionmakers that if they want to continue their enmity with Iran and to succeed, these $20 million should be put into the hands of people who know how to deal with Iran. But he has nothing new to offer himself.

Irrespective of the incentives behind the old methods and the repetitive remarks by Perlmuter, the experience of the past 17 years very clearly shows that despite extensive, organized, and persistent foreign threats, no one can weaken the determination of our nation to continue on its path. On the contrary, because of their "anti- foreign nature", the people of Iran—irrespective of their inclinations and beliefs—immediately plan to confront and thwart the enemy's onslaught and plots as soon as they feel a threat from outside.

The history of the past two centuries and especially of the past two decades in Iran very clearly shows that by preserving the uniformity of our forces at home, no one can break the determination of the Iranian nation. Each time during the past two decades that the enemies have succeeded in their onslaught, it has been because of the absence of this uniformity among our popular forces. They have been able to divide the ranks of the people only when our people have been overtaken by doubts. But this time, the Iranian nation has referred to its past experiences and has rubbed the muzzle of the enemy of humanity in mud in such a way that America feels weak and impotent and is constantly admitting its defeat in its efforts to confront Iran and the world movement of Islam. And after 17 years, the question that still remains unanswered for America is: How should Iran be confronted?

Tehran Welcomes Call To Improve Saudi-Iranian Relations

MM3001150896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 30 Jan 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Ghassan al-Tahir: "Iran Stresses Importance of Expanding Cooperation With Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — Tehran has welcomed the call by Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi second deputy prime minister and defense and aviation minister, to improve relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, Iranian deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "We are willing to develop our relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to expand areas of cooperation because we believe that that would be in the interests of Islam and Muslims."

He pointed out that Iran "views cooperation with the Gulf states from a special angle, in view of its extreme importance at all levels, especially the security level." He went on: "We — on both sides of the Gulf — cannot dispense with security."

He explained his country's view on ways of establishing security in the Gulf region, saying: "Iran is willing to cooperate with all states in the region, since we believe that our main task is to spread the spirit of trust between us and to eliminate some aspects of our differences."

Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz stressed recently that Saudi Arabia aspires to establish the best of relations with Iran, since the two are major Muslim countries in the region and it is natural for them to be bound by cordial relations.

Mahmud Mohammadi, a spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, declared that "the Islamic Republic [of Iran] has always sought to reinforce its relations with the Islamic states." He described relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran as "good, and there has been good cooperation and coordination between us in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, especially with regard to the Bosnian issue. We believe that strengthening relations with the Islamic states in the region serves the interests of all its states."

As is known, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati stressed three weeks ago that his country is seeking "to strengthen relations" with Saudi Arabia and "to establish a permanent dialogue" with it.

Tehran Radio Views Tension Between Greece, Turkey

NC3101084396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The tension that surfaced in Turkish-Greek relations on Saturday [27 January] over a 4-hectare island in the Aegean Sea has escalated such that the two countries have positioned warships against each other and a military clash could erupt between the two.

The crisis began when some Turkish correspondents arrived on the Turkish island of Kardak, Imia according to Greece. After removing the Greek flag they hoisted the Turkish flag on the island. Greece reacted strongly and a chain of harsh posturing, threatening political moves, and military provocation was generated, increasing the possibility of the two NATO members becoming embroiled in a military confrontation.

This elicited a swift political reaction from the United States and Europe, deeply apprehensive that fissures and internal differences could emerge in NATO ranks. U.S. President Bill Clinton was motivated to ask the Turkish and Greek leaders to settle their differences amicably.

Greece and Turkey have longstanding differences, stemming from various factors, such as reciprocal territorial claims, nationalistic tendencies, ethnic hostilities between the Turkish and Greek communities in Cyprus and in other areas around the two countries, and, finally, both countries' coveting the subterranean and maritime resources of the Aegean Sea and other regional waters. Along with these things, the strategic importance and legal sovereignty of islets, like Kardak, or Imia, has fueled this conflict between the two neighboring countries, which occasionally end up confronting each other.

Experts say other problems and domestic crises can also be mentioned as powerful catalysts sparking such crises. When differences emerge between political factions and it looks as if they cannot solve internal problems, the idea of exploiting a rival's weaknesses motivates some politicians to use the opportunity to transfer the crisis beyond the country's frontiers or to reap political successes to use them in internal political balances.

Such is the immense potential danger of a crisis surfacing in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece that it is hoped the countries at the helm of NATO and the European Union [EU] will use their diplomatic initiatives for political rapprochement in the differences between Turkey and Greece over a disputed uninhabited island, although relations between these two will continue to experience sporadic tension for an unforeseeable period.

Iranian Paper Accuses King Husayn of 'Treason' With Israel

NC3001183896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 18 Jan 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "Amman Will Pay for Its Treason"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The signing of the agreement between King Husayn and the rulers of occupied Palestine has sparked off a wave of popular opposition inside Jordan. The people and Islamic and political parties there have condemned the new pacts that Amman and Tel Aviv finalized after King Husayn's recent visit to occupied Palestine. They have described the pacts as a new treason against the Palestinian nation and against the Muslim Jordanian people.

One of the mistakes which unfortunately most Arab governments in the Middle East have made is that they have ignored the will and view of their people in their calculations; and the strongest blows that the Arab governments have received have always come from the people. Nevertheless, these blows have not been able to make them reconsider their mistakes.

The haste with which the Arab regimes in the Middle East have shown themselves for compromise with the usurping Israeli regime during the past four years has sometimes surprised even the Zionists. It has thus given them more incentive to further denigrate the Arabs. During the past four years and since the Arab-Israeli compromise process started, Israeli statesmen have made the utmost use of the Arabs' inaction in order to forward their own political and economic objectives in the region. Actually in the post-Camp David years, no factor has helped pave the way for the growth and expansion of Zionist ideas in the region and the stabilization of Israel's political position in occupied Palestine more than the political weakness of the Arab regimes. And the more the Arab front's weakness and retreat has increased, the more the Zionists have advanced in their offensive positions. This ugly equation has been going on for years. The outcome has been that Israel—which called on the Arab governments in the 1973 war to show self-restraint and the Americans and the world forums to extend help—today sets conditions for so-called peace with the same Arab governments. It also ridicules them, so much that during the past four years, Zionist newspapers and mass media have been full of articles, caricatures, and even films that denigrate the Arabs.

This approach is not at all surprising in view of the political disintegration in the Arab front.

The behavior of Jordan, Egypt, the PLO, and some Arab shaykhdoms in the Persian Gulf in their confrontation with the phenomenon of Zionism is considered an unforgivable treason against the oppressed Palestinian nation, as well as against their own nations. This behavior will be registered in their records and these countries' present and future generations will only think of these regimes with hatred and disgrace when they glance at the black annals of their treacheries.

King Husayn's regime definitely did not take the nation's interests into mind when signing the various cultural, political, economic, and other agreements with the Zionist regime. Therefore, it is not in the interests of the Jordanians to ignore the opinion of their pious people or to ignore such insults. The Jordanian nation is a committed and alert nation. The Jordanian people are quite able to tell the difference between ugly and beautiful, between good and bad, and between services and treason. They are also capable of adopting a suitable stand on each and every one of these phenomena. However, it is feared that the rulers in Amman will realize the strength of their people's will only when they are defeated.

Commentary Sees Increasing French Interest in Iran, Iraq

NC3101090896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 17 Jan 96 p 12

[Commentary by M.Veysi: "Paris Looks Toward Tehran and Baghdad"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The crisis-ridden strategic Middle East region recently witnessed extensive political and diplomatic moves by French diplomatic elements. We must assess France's actions, such as its mediation in the Yemen-Eritrea dispute in the Red Sea; its dispatch of an official parliamentary delegation to Iraq five years after the Persian Gulf war, coinciding with visits to the region by the defense and foreign ministers of Alain Juppe's government; and harsh criticism of the United States by the deputy speaker of the French Parliament and the French foreign minister, accusing it of trying to overshadow the benefits for France and all the other European countries in the Washington-Tehran feud and describing Washington's pressure on Iran's trading partners as unwarranted.

From an international perspective, such developments are connected to France and the rest of Europe's overt and covert disagreement with the United States over the results of regional crises in the Balkans, North Africa, the Arab Middle East, and the Persian Gulf.

Astute observers say Paris wants to compensate for its defeat by the United States over the Balkan crisis and the implementation of the Dayton peace accord. Paris views very seriously recent recommendations by Peres and Weizman, the heads of the Zionist regime, for Europe's increased participation in the Middle East peace talks. It considers the foregoing to be an attempt to make up for past U.S. problems in normalizing relations with Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon.

Those who support such views are not far wrong. But a more logical reason could be that the conditions are now more conducive for the French Government to pay more serious attention to its "objective" interests in the region. The rightists in power in Paris have a parliamentary majority and the office of president. They have also been relieved somewhat of the burden of the Balkan crisis, something that can enable them to regain their role, which had weakened, in the Middle East.

On the political front, France believes Iraq's cooperation with the international community will increase as it emerges from its current isolation. Contrary to U.S. wishes, it has opened an interests section in Iraq. Political relations between Paris and Tehran are being pursued from the distinctive European vantage point of "opposition to Iran's isolation." Paris would prefer to maintain its ties with Iran by continuing its policy of criticism and discussion.

Economically, and perhaps the most important reason for Paris' recent attention to the Middle East, France sees many potential benefits in cooperating with Tehran and Baghdad.

While commercial exchanges with Tehran and other countries dropped in 1995, due to a policy of minimizing imports from Tehran, Paris exported $305 million of goods to Iran in the first six months of the year and imported $502 million of goods from Iran in the same period. It ranked third in Iran's trading partners, with Total and Peugeot gaining a suitable presence in Iran's oil and automobile market.

In Iraq the French obtained the contract for a massive oil project in the Nahr 'Umar and the Majnun Islands through Total and Elf-Octane and are now seeking to lift international sanctions on Iraq to exploit these opportunities for their own interests.

The dual containment of Iran and Iraq by the United States appears to have encountered a setback from the French and the rest of Europe, which prefer to keep their workers employed and to protect their own interests rather than move into line with Washington's ideological enmity with Tehran and the Washington hierarchy's hostility toward Saddam.

Turkish Press Reports Criticizing Iran on Northern Iraq Denied

NC3001210396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iranian Embassy in Turkey has issued a statement denying a report by the daily SABAH that the Islamic Republic of Iran is maintaining its approach on developments in Iraq and that Tehran favors the establishment of a Kurdish federation in northern Iraq. The statement recalled that one of the principles Iran upholds in its foreign policy calls for the maintenance of the territorial integrity of all countries, particularly the territorial integrity of Iran's neighbors. It noted that any kind of weakening in the independence of Iran's neighbors will create problems in the region. The statement also recalled Iran's mediation between the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq and said that Tehran tried to persuade them to agree to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity and avoid internationalizing the Kurdish problem. Furthermore, it warned them that they may cause division in Iraq if they fail to agree.

Tehran Radio Cites AP on Demonstrations in Bahrain

NC3101065396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] ASSOCIATED PRESS reports that antigovernment demonstrations were held in a village near Manama, the capital of Bahrain, yesterday. The Bahraini security forces reportedly used teargas to disperse demonstrators.

According to the agency, most of the demonstrators were arrested.

Iran Daily Notes Bomb Explosion in Bahrain, Release of Cleric

NC3001224896 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 18 Jan 96 p 16

[FBIS Translated Text] According to an Associated Press report from Manama Bahrain, a small bomb exploded in a restroom at the Royal Meridien Hotel in Bahrain, following which law enforcement forces evacuated hundreds of occupants from the huge hotel.

After the explosion, an unidentified person called the Associated Press office and said: Tell the government we exploded this bomb and we are able to plant bombs wherever we decide to do so.

A law enforcement source stated: The bomb that exploded in the men's restroom and damaged its floor and ceiling did not cause any casualties. Most of the hotel's occupants were visitors who had come to attend the Middle East oil and gas conference that was being held in Manama, the center of Bahrain. This conference was attended by 450 delegates from 30 countries.

Another report from Bahrain states: A few hours after talks with Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, the political leader of the Bahraini Shiites, regarding the recent unrest in Bahrain, the authorities released him. According to a Bahraini Government official who wished to remain anonymous, the Shaykh was treated with respect and his interrogators merely advised him and asked him to exercise restraint. Earlier, al-Jamri and seven other religious speakers had been warned not to use mosques and religious gatherings for political purposes.

According to remarks by the family members of those arrested, two of the persons who had been arrested along with Shaykh al-Jamri were not released. One was a businessman and the other an engineer.

A statement by the opponents of the Bahraini regime in London said that after the arrests, extensive demonstrations were held in most towns and villages in Bahrain.

Iran Majles Speaker Appeals For Participation in Elections

LD3101122096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Majles held an open session this morning. Before starting the agenda, Majles Speaker ['Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri] offered congratulations to the nation on the occasion of 12th Bahman [1 February], the anniversary of Imam Khomeyni's victorious return to the Islamic homeland. He described as unprecedented the enthusiastic welcome given to his eminence by the people.

Referring to the enemies' propaganda and conspiracies to defeat the Islamic revolution, he said: The genuine Islam, the leadership, and the people are the main foundations of the revolution and the Islamic system in Iran. Thanks to Islamic inspiration, wise leadership of the esteemed leader [Khamene'i], and the active presence of the people in the arena, all the conspiracies were foiled.

Nateq-Nuri added: The committed members of the experts' assembly performed their mission properly by appointing His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i as the leader of the revolution. Thanks to this appointment, the path chosen by the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran [Ayatollah Khomeyni] remains open with all its might and glory.

He praised the decisive role played by the main foundations of the revolution during the reconstruction period and said: Under the guidance of the brave leader, thanks to the commitment of the loyal nation, the alertness of our powerful Armed Forces, and the capabilities of the government, the reconstruction period is progressing successfully.

Nateq-Nuri pointed out: The government's achievements are brilliant, we are proud of these achievements and can offer them to the world as an example to follow.

He referred to the revival of Islam and its increasing support in the world as one of the objectives of the Islamic revolution and added: When we witnessed that 1 million American blacks chanted the slogan of "God is great" in front of the White House to seek their rights, when we saw that the Bosnian Muslims confronted the criminal Serbs with the weapon of "God is great" and love for martyrdom, and when we observed that the Palestinians fought the Zionists by chanting revolutionary and Islamic slogans, we came to appreciate the importance of the wave created by the [Iranian] Islamic revolution. These are the fruits of this revolution.

Reiterating the importance of the people's active participation in the fifth round of the Majles elections, he pointed out that the people have an eternal strong link with the leadership and the state authorities. He expressed the hope that our country's vigilant and loyal people, who have proved their love for Islam, the revolution, and the esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution, would take part in the forthcoming Majles elections more enthusiastically than before.

100 Majles Candidates Register With Tehran Governorate

LD3001133596 Tehran IRNA in English 1217 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 30, IRNA — One hundred candidates have so far registered with Tehran Governorate for running in the March 8 parliamentary polls on the first day of a one-week long deadline given to all nomineed for registration.

Governor of Tehran, Ali Payandeh told IRNA that six women, six persons from religious minorities and seven clerics are among the one hundred registered nominees. Payandeh said all 100 people have said they are independent candidates.

The governor said in the meantime that some measures have been taken to facilitate the process of registration in Tehran constituency.

Announcement on Iranian Election Registrations Set for 12 Feb

LD3001133896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Candidates have started to register for the 5th round of the Islamic Consultative Assembly's elections. The registration will go on until 5 February throughout Islamic Iran. [passage omitted]

The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Electoral Headquarters announced that on 6 February, the initial investigation of the efficiency of the candidates will be started by the executive delegation and the results will be declared on 12 February.

Iranian Parties' Joint List of Prospective Candidates Announced

NC3101113296 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 Jan 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution has compiled a list of possible candidates for elections to the fifth Islamic Majles. A knowledgeable source told our correspondent: Dr. Sa'id Hajarian, Dr. Sa'id Aqajari, Salamati, Mohsen Armin, Behzad Nabavi, Hadi Khaneki, Najafqoli Habibi, and Dr. Taslimi are among the possible candidates in a joint list compiled by the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution and the Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat [Islamic Students Association], which are preparing to contest the fifth Majles elections.

Iran's Salamati Predicts Victory for Independents, Technocrats

LD3101114896 Tehran IRNA in English 1116 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 31, IRNA — Secretary General of Mojahedin-e Enqelab-e Eslami [Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution] Organization (MEEO), Mohammad Salamati, predicted that in the fifth Majles line-up, "the traditional rightists will lose their majority, but not to the left wing." He made the remarks in an interview with the Persian daily 'IRAN' on Wednesday, adding that it is the independent candidates and technocrats who will win the majority of the parliamentary seats in the March 8 elections. Salamati called on all left wing political groups to actively participate in the forthcoming parliamentrary elections, despite expressing no hope for their winning the majority.

MEEO secretary general reiterated that the people, by casting their ballots, decide the fate and future of their country. "We believe all existing political groups including the modern rightists and new leftists should appear on the scene of elections so that the threat of monopoly by a specific faction or group will be eliminated," he noted. Salamati also said that his organization does not intend to form a coalition with right wing factions and groups, believing that the left wing should retain its independent status and entity.

Regarding MEEO's list of candidates, he said that the organization is presently making effort to form a coalition with other left wing groups so that they will present a joint list. But, he added, if the attempt proves futile, MEEO will present its independent list.

Editorial Seeks Participation in Iran's Majles Elections

NC3101025196 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 20 Jan 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "What the Majles Needs Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last week most of the reporting was on the elections for the fifth Majles term, something that pushed the heat of the election campaigns to its zenith. The directives by the leader of the revolution to the governors general and to other election officials, the remarks by the president on the same topic and by the Majles speaker, the Friday sermon, the remarks by some influential religious personalities, and—finally—the statement by 16 executive officials last week all showed the seriousness and significance of this vital political and social issue in our country. Therefore, we consider it necessary to point out some things:

1. Among the most important points in the directive of the esteemed leader of the revolution and in the remarks of the president were their references to the need for honesty, for ensuring the healthiness of the elections, and for refraining from factionalism. Election officials—from the members of the Council of Guardians to Interior Ministry officials—should realize that expressing factional views, even if on a limited level that may serve specific individuals or a specific faction is definitely treason against the revolution, the Islamic system, and the Muslim nation and its Majles, which is the fruit of the tree that was watered with the pure blood shed by our great martyrs. Therefore, in expressing opinions on the competence of the candidates and on other issues concerning the elections, no one should put factional interests above the interests of the revolution and of the Islamic system. This is the only way in which the healthiness and freedom of the elections can be ensured. This is the secret for the continuation of the divine system that has been chosen by the devoted and selfless people of our Islamic homeland.

2. The active and extensive participation of each and every member of our society and of the groups in the Majles elections is a political and religious duty. This extremely significant duty cannot be ignored. The expectations that some of our own forces at home express in the form of criticisms and about the need to overcome problems, even if opportune, cannot be an excuse for not having actively participating in the elections. Making fair and sympathetic criticisms and efforts to overcome problems can serve the revolution and the system only in a healthy election campaign. Only this is tantamount to performing the duties set for us by the Imam, and there is no logical justification for refraining from performing this duty.

3. Reports and the news show that the triangle of the unwilling, the rich, and the insensitive, and the technocrats have greedily focused their attention on the fifth Majles. This wretched triangle wants to open up the way to the Majles with the help of "money" and to sacrifice Islamic and revolutionary aspirations to fulfill its own wishes. Contrary to the immature statements by those who believe that our revolutionary aspirations and our religious values are safe from the enemy's onslaught today—since the enemy has realized that our revolutionary aspirations and our religious values are the main source of the Islamic Revolution—they have concentrated their organized onslaught against them. Therefore, the Majles needs revolutionary and committed forces now more than ever before. Fortunately today is the day when the committed revolutionary forces are, in general, also highly skilled and very competent.

What the Majles needs today is revolutionary and committed forces. This need can be met only with the broad participation of all forces, with all their different tastes, and of all factions. The absence of some of these forces will mean abandoning the scene for the same sinister triangle that wants to enter the Majles with the help of money to achieve its goal. God forbid this.

Tehran Daily Calls Voting in Majles Election 'Religious' Duty

LD3101092796 Tehran IRNA in English 0825 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 31, IRNA — The English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' in its editorial Wednesday stressed that active participation of the Iranian nation in the fifth Majles polls is a religious and national duty. Comparing the Islamic uprising in Iran with those that took place in other parts of the world, the paper wrote that unlike many other revolutions in the recent history of mankind, the Islamic revolution put a parliamentary system in place as soon as it achieved victory.

In the Islamic system of Iran, there are no big cartels or lobby groups to influence the normal functioning of the Majles, it noted, hence, the Iranian people enjoy absolute and utmost freedom in electing their parliamentary representatives.

'TEHRAN TIMES' called on all Iranians to participate in the fifth Majles elections on March 8, which, it said, is going to open a new chapter in the history of the parliamentary system in the country.

Noting that citizens' rights and duties go hand in hand, it underscored that people are expected to exercise those rights in order to play their role in building a prosperous Iran.

Iran Majles Passes Budget Bill Amendments

LD3001164496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At today's morning and afternoon sessions of the Majles, the deputies finished debating the report of the special 1375 [1996-7] budget commission concerning the amendments proposed by the Guardian Council and passed all these amendments.

According to the Central News Unit's report, taking note of the amendments carried out to satisfy the demands of the Guardian Council, the session announced the figures amended in next year's budget as follows: The country's budget for 1375, in terms of revenue, other sources of income and expenses, and other payments amounts to more than 137,222,647,323,000 rials.

The government's general budget, amounts to over 61,103,786,321,000 rials. General revenues amount to over 55,851,178,593,000 rials, and the budget of government companies amount to over 89,078,590,694,000 rials.

The Majles will hold an open session tomorrow morning in order to ratify the Guardian Council's final views on the amendments passed by today's open sessions.

Rafsanjani Inspects Plan, Budget Organization

LD3101101896 Tehran IRNA in English 0906 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 31, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Wednesday [31 January] inspected various departments of the Plan and Budget Organization and was briefed on the preparation and regulation process of basic and infrastructural projects. The president inspected the historical documents related to development projects carried out in Iran during the past 47 years at the pavilion where the documents of that period are put on display.

Another department visited by the president was the advanced computer center of the Plan and Budget Organization. At the center, President Rafsanjani was briefed on the characteristics and special features of country's total budget system, management services, executive and technical systems, information dissemination and communications, supervision and evaluation of the development projects. Later during his tour of the organization, the president made a speech to an audience of directors and experts working with the Plan and Budget Organization.

Meanwhile, the head of the organization, Hamid Mirzadeh, updated the president on the implementation of the country's development projects.

Iranian Minerals, Metal Product Export Figures Released

LD3101104596 Tehran IRNA in English 1006 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 31, IRNA — The value of minerals and metal products exported by the companies affiliated to the Ministry of Mines and Metals during the first eight months of the current Iranian year (1374) amounted to dlrs. 325.776 million, down by 18.4 percent compared to the same period last year.

According to the Persian daily 'HAMSHAHRI' on Wednesday, dlrs. 237 million out of the above sum was earned through the export of metal products.

During the said period, 615,000 tons of steel with a value of dlrs. 166 million was exported, down by 33 percent in terms of weight and 17 percent in terms of value, compared to the corresponding period last year.

The value of copper exports during the period was dlrs. 36 million, up by 19 percent compared to the same period in 1373. Furthermore, the exports of aluminum ingot, lead ingot, and copper products were down by 28, 53, and 49 percent, respectively in terms of value.

The report also added that during the same period, the export of concentrated lead, chromite, and other ores increased in value by 12.5, 147, and 95 percent and earned the country dlrs. 1.3, 35 and 19 million, respectively.

Ayatollah Khamene'i on Importance of Koranic Teaching

LD3001202296 Tehran IRNA in English 2009 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 30, IRNA — Leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i said here today that as public knowledge of the teachings of the Holy Koran improves, the Iranian society gets closer to the creation of a society based on the divine ideology. Ayatollah Khamene'i, who was addressing a group of reciters of the Holy Koran at the end of a recitation ceremony on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadhan when the Muslims all over the world observe fasting, expressed hope that youngsters as well as those with a capacity to recite the holy scripture would also endeavor to learn its teachings.

He said the post-revolution period had offered the right conditions for the people to learn the Holy Koran as a first solid step for building a society on the principles of the holy book.

Ayatollah Khamene'i said the cure for all pains of the humans in the modern world was to be found in the Holy Koran as it was at the advent of Islam, and finally added that the right order, which human beings crave for, is indicated to them in the Holy Koran.

Pakistan

Pakistani Foreign Minister: India To Pay 'Heavy Price' for Actions

BK3001150696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said Pakistan will take all necessary steps to protect its people from any possible Indian attack, and India will pay a heavy price for its actions. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad today, he said Pakistan is against war, but our restraint must not read as our weakness. He said India's recent actions—including the test of Prithvi missile, rocket attacks on Azad Kashmir, and its plan to conduct a nuclear test—is a demonstration of its lack of self confidence.

Sardar Asif Ali said Pakistan has behaved with utmost responsibility in response to India's attack on Forward Kahuta near the Line of Control. The foreign minister, however, hoped the Indian leadership will step back from such adventures and dangerous policies toward its neighbors. He rejected the Indian denial of carrying out the rocket attack on Forward Kahuta saying it is stupid lie, and Pakistan has written to the United Nations about this attack.

Replying to a question about Pakistan's reaction in the face of India conducting the planned the nuclear test at Pokaran, he said it has become a psychological problem with India that it wants to show its manhood through a show of military muscle and trying to act as lord and master in the region. Sardar Asif said India is spreading a self destructive path with the show of military muscle. The Indian nuclear test near Pokaran will not only be a setback to efforts on concluding Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but also it will be a grave threat to peace in South Asia, he added. He also said by not holding talks on Kashmir under Simla agreement, India is killing the agreement.

Pakistani Foreign Minister: Country To 'Counter' Indian Attacks

BK3101084996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0344 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan 31 (AFP) — Pakistan does not want an escalation of tension with India but will act to counter any new attack on civilians in Kashmir, Pakistani Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali said.

"If civilians are hit we will have to take whatever action is necessary," Ali said in an interview with AFP and the French daily Le Monde here Tuesday.

A rocket attack on a mosque last Friday that killed 20 people in the border village of Kahuta on Pakistani side in Kashmir has been blamed by Islamabad on India, which has denied the accusation.

Terming the surge in tensions as an "extremely negative development", Ali dismissed apprehensions that India could use the situation to mount a strike on Pakistani territory: "They are not such fools to do such an adventure," Ali said, adding "they know our capability."

Both nations — locked in a nearly half-century dispute over Kashmir, the catalyst for two of their three wars since independence in 1947 — are believed to possess a "nuclear capability" but deny possessing the atomic bomb.

Ali warned India against lifting what he called "nuclear ambiguity" in South Asia — a reference to uncertainty over the degree of nuclear advancement by the two rivals.

"A nuclear test by India will be a great setback... If India makes such a stupid step, Indian nuclear ambiguity will be broken... There will be an immense sense of insecurity for Pakistan."

A US paper last month said American experts suspected India of preparing to conduct a nuclear test. New Delhi denied the report.

"If India makes a nuclear test then Pakistan may be pushed into breaking also the ambiguity," he said adding "it will be a very sad day for the world."

Ali accused India of "interfering heavily" in Afghanistan, saying Pakistan had "proof" that India has provided Kabul with military equipment, spare parts and aircraft engines.

"They have trained Afghan pilots and sent technicians" to help the government of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, he said. "They are fuelling the civil war in Afghanistan."

Ali derided as baseless any allegation of Pakistani support to anti-Rabbani Afghan Taliban Islamic militia, which have been besieging Kabul for the last four months.

"Nobody has been able to prove that we have given even one bullet to the Taleban," the minister said.

Pakistani 'Sources' Say India Fired 2 Rockets on Azad Kashmir

BK3001155196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The two rockets fired by India on Forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir on 26 January weighed 56 pounds each and were fired from multiple-barreled rocket launchers in the Punch sector. Informed sources told the Associated Press of Pakistan that the rockets, which landed in Forward Kahuta and killed 18 persons, were fired from the 93d Infantry Brigade's zone.

Islamabad Denies Report of Killings at Line of Control

BK3101042696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has denied reports of the killing of five people at the Line of Control while crossing into the occupied Kashmir in the Samba sector. Defense sources told APP that the allegations about Pakistani troops having intensified across border firing is also wrong. He said the Indian disinformation campaign is meant to divert world attention from the volatile situation in the occupied Kashmir and from its crime of firing rockets on the faithfuls gathered to offer Friday prayers in Forward Kahuta.

Answering a question about the situation at the Line of Control, the sources said Pakistan has exercised restraint all along, but when situation aggravates it has to take perforce certain preventive steps. The sources said the Indian Government intends to create tension along the Line of Control to win sympathies of the Indian electorate for the upcoming general election. However, the sources said Pakistani troops are fully alert and capable to thwart any aggression by the enemy.

Pakistani Generals Says Preparation Best Way To Avert War

BK3101093396 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Jan 96 p 1, 13

["Special Report"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — "The first and foremost principle of defence is not to consider the enemy weak or unprepared and the best way to avert a war is to prepare for the war. We can counter Indian aggression by uniting the whole nation under one banner. We cannot defend ourselves against the enemy if the country remains fraught with chaotic situation and political confrontation."

These were the views which some defence experts expressed during a survey conducted by THE NATION on "How imminent the war is."

Gen (Retd) Mumtaz said the decision of war is not made overnight. The nation is prepared for war after long considerations and deliberations. He said people of Pakistan should always be prepared and alert against Indian aggressions. Armed forces have high morale when the nation is united and supports them in the war.

Gen (Retd) KM Azhar said though there is no threat of an immediate war with India, yet we should be ready and prepared. He added, "We should not dwell on the Indian promises of peace instead we should depend on ourselves and be prepared for any eventuality." Gen (Retd) M.H. Ansari said rocket attack on Forward Kahuta mosque is enough to awaken us from slumber of lethargy. "We must unite and foil the wicked designs of the enemy," he said.

Gen (Retd) Hameed Gul said, "We armed forces have all potentials to counter Indian aggression, but we must forge internal unity at all costs." He stressed the need for national unity and end of chaotic political situation.

Pakistani Editorial Says Policy Must Anticipate Delhi's Intentions

BK2901105596 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 29 Jan 96 p 6

[Editorial: "India's Republic Day Celebration"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A day which should have been remembered with solemnity and self-assessment was celebrated by India through brutal manifestation of her power to kill innocent people and sacrilege of the places of worship. India chose its Republic Day to give this message to the world as to how the world's biggest "democracy" recaptures its history and betrays the contours of its future.

New Delhi's record of violating human rights, initiating provocative steps, tearing to pieces the norms and agreements with the world bodies and international law and intimidating its peaceful neighbours is as old as the existence of India as an independent nation. Totally oblivious to the crushing poverty of its millions, it is bent upon snatching even the last morsel from the hungry mouths of its inhabitants in order to enhance its firing power. And the irony is that all this is done in the wake of many odds which do not bother India. Each time it faces an internal crisis, it attempts to divert the attention of its people from the pressing problems at home.

The latest deliberate act of aggression against the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir was aimed at hiding the ugly scars on the face of its democratic and constitutional pretensions in the Occupied Kashmir. The freedom fighters of the valley had decided to observe the Republic Day of India as a black day because they have received nothing from India's constitutional framework but smoke, fire and blood. This motive was strengthened by the fact that Mr. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party was not doing too well to expect a victory in the coming elections. Because of an insatiable urge to show that the government had the power not only to violate international law but also could indulge in the acts like the demolition of Babri Mosque and the burning of Charar Sharif in the neighbouring areas also, the Friday congregation at Forward Kahuta was chosen as target. This was shamelessly carried out by hitting the mosque. In order to send a message to the world community in general and Pakistan in particular, India test-fired its Prithvi missile.

So far as India is concerned, these are the ingredients of its democratic institutions. We are led to believe that our planet is shrinking into a global village but the question is to what extent such stubborn irritants to world peace and security are going to help humanity in its quest for a better world? India's belligerent posture is indeed a threat to world peace but the imminent threat is faced by Pakistan. Whenever Islamabad has brought this issue to the notice of the world bodies or those who matter or even those Muslim countries who do not understand the parameters of India's aggressive intrusions, the response has mostly been lukewarm. And if Pakistan tries to develop its defence equipment commensurate with the Indian threat, the custodians of world peace chastise Pakistan rather than taking any notice of what India is doing.

Obviously, this cannot go on far a long time. Sooner or later, the dictators of world peace will have to realize where does the danger lie. The Muslim world have no option but to understand that India's targets are much beyond the horizons of its borders. More important than these, Pakistan has to adopt a policy which is not only responsive to India's actions but also anticipates its future designs. We have been too law-abiding, too polite and too gullible to what our "friends" have been telling us. But more laxity in this regard could prove suicidal.

This act of naked aggression and killing of the people in prayer needs to be brought to the attention of the world community in a way that the situation demands and we should not be content with any false hopes of India's changing its course of action. This is the time to take a stock of our attitudes both towards world affairs as well as our inherent capabilities to effectively face these challenges.

Pakistani Editorial Warns of Indian 'Big Power Obsession'

BK3001094096 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 30 Jan 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Need for Vigilance"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Talking to journalists at Islamabad, President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said that Pakistan would respond to India's acts of aggression across then Line of Control but ruled out any possibility of war with it. "The escalation of tension and the brutal action", he said, "was reflective of Indian frustration in Occupied Kashmir where an intensified movement in going on." He warned India not to target civilians in future, and said the rocket attack reflected a dangerous trend which must stop immediately for peace in the region.

Meanwhile, exchange of fire along the Line of Control is continuing. Pakistan's UN representative Ahmad Kamal discussed the increased tension in the area and its likely consequence with UN Secretary-General Butrus-Ghali, who assured that he would keep a close watch on the situation. In Srinagar, Hurriyet Chairman Omar Farooq appealed for UN intervention, saying the small skirmishes could any time lead to a full-scale battle. As such "the UN has role and it should play that now."

India's 'big power' obsession, [word indistinct] the bully instinct are the main reasons for the troubles in the region. In the backdrop of sagging popularity of the Rao government amidst financial scandals and the coming general elections, its nervousness is evident from the frantic efforts it is making to salvage its image among the public. It started with the projected second nuclear test, but was apparently thwarted by US intelligence disclosures. However, it has persisted with the recent test-trial of the latest version of Prithvi missile and is deploying it along the border with Pakistan. The outrageous rocket attack on innocent civilians in Azad Kashmir is a pointer to India's intentions. The people of Kashmir living close to the Line of Control have been facing considerable threats due to the increasing violations by India for quite some time. With the intensification of the liberation movement in the Valley and the failure of frequent Indian bids to stage the farcical election drama, Indian may be tempted to increase tension in the troubled land. Indo-Pakistan enmity has its origin in the Kashmir dispute and unless it is solved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiris, there cannot be any hope of peace and stability in the region. The world community, especially the United States, has a responsibility to work for removing irritants in the way of peace and prosperity in this region. The misplaced hegemonic India ambitions need to be checked firmly.

Islamabad To Press NAM for Effective Nuclear Disarmament

BK2901113796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Jan 96 p 1,11

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD—Pakistan is strongly committed to the call of the Non-Aligned Movement [NAM] for the commencement of negotiations as matter of the highest priority, for a phased reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame.

This was said by Ambassador Muhir Akram, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office, Geneva before the Conference on Disarmament [CD] in its first meeting of the 1996 session.

According to a message received here on Sunday, he said that the call has been endorsed overwhelmingly by the UN General Assembly.

It is unfortunate, he said, that the consensus which exists within this body, at the moment, is only to resume the negotiations for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. Pakistan has consistently advocated the objective of a CTBT for the past 30 years. We are glad that those who opposed this treaty in the past are now its strongest proponents. But the treaty we build in this body must not be such that it will transform those who supported the CTBT in the past into its opponents.

He said for over 30 years, the CTBT has been envisaged as a measure to halt the qualitative development of nuclear weapons and to foreclose the possibility of their horizontal proliferation. Indeed, at the first Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, the international community resolved to achieve a "cessation of nuclear-weapon testing by all states within the framework of an effective nuclear disarmament process".

The Ambassador said Pakistan, together with other members of the Group of 21 and other like-minded states will continue to press for such an effective nuclear disarmament process in this body. We hope that you will continue consultations designed to evolve a consensus on this issue of highest priority.

He said the Pakistan delegation has made, and will continue to make a substantive contribution to the conclusion of a CTBT as soon as possible in 1996. While the advanced textual stage represents considerable progress in the CTBT negotiations, several important issues remain to be resolved before the negotiations can be successfully concluded.

The most fundamental outstanding issue is the "Scope" of the Treaty. By definition, the CTBT must ban all nuclear explosions comprehensively.

No exceptions can be allowed for any reason. Moreover, a basic aim of the CTBT is to prevent the further qualitative development of nuclear weapons. Thus, the Treaty must prohibit all activities which are inconsistent with this objective. For this reason, it needs to be established that concepts such as zero yield and no-yield tests are compatible with the CTBT's fundamental aims.

He said the CD has made considerable progress towards evolving an International Monitoring System [IMS]. It should not take too long to reach agreement on the architecture of the IMS, unless new problems arise. The endeavor, we feel, should be to achieve an effective verification regime. The conclusion of the CTBT should not flounder on the shoals of an ambition to build a verification system which goes beyond the requirements of a CTBT.

He said in this context, we have serious reservations regarding some of the proposals relating to on-site inspections under the CTBT. OSI [On-Site Inspections] should be a rare occurrence in the CTBT verification regime. It should be a measure of last resort in resolving questions of compliance. The treaty must incorporate adequate safeguards against the abuse of OSIs. On-Site Inspections should be activated only by those events which are detected by the International Monitoring System and not by so-called National Technical Means. Inspections must be first authorised by the Executive Council—in what is popularly called the "green light" procedure. And any OSIs that are authorised must be conducted in the last intrusive manner.

Muhajir Akram said, in the past few weeks, new doubts have arisen about the prospects of the CTBT and of a non-nuclear future for South Asia.

He said when the "Smiling Budha" was exploded 20 years ago, Pakistan's response was to propose the creation of a nuclear weapon free zone in South Asia—a concept repeatedly endorsed by the world community. Since then, nuclear weapon free zones have been created in Latin America, South Pacific, Africa and perhaps soon in South East Asia. In our region, unfortunately, there are on the contrary, indications of preparations for another nuclear test. The son of Smiling Buddha could precipitate a nuclear race in South Asia. It will certainly subvert the possibility of concluding the CTBT in the near future. We look forward to categorical assurances that such a test is not being contemplated and will not be conducted.

He said I must add that my government is equally concerned by recent statements that the serial production of nuclear capable missiles has been commenced and that these missiles will be soon be deployed across our border. This will create a hair-trigger security environment in a region where tensions already run high. It will oblige Pakistan to take appropriate measures to respond to the qualitatively more threatening security environment. We hope very much that everything will be done by the world community to prevent such a fateful step.

He said speaking in Tokyo three days ago, Pakistan Prime Minister Bhutto had said:

"Let Prime Minister Rao join me anywhere in the world to ensure that what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never happen in Lahore and Delhi." She asked Prime Minister Rao to join her in saying "no" to a nuclear future, he added.

Pakistan: Afghan Leaders Condemn Indian Rocket Attack

BK3101094396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 31 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by THE NEWS Peshawar bureau]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — Several Afghan leaders have condemned the Indian rocket attack on Forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir and expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir and Pakistan.

They included Hezb-e-Eslami chief Golboddin Hekmatyar, former Afghan President Prof Sebghatollah Mojaddedi and Mojahedin commander Maulana Yaqub Shariatyar. Hekmatyar, asked India to learn a lesson from defeat of erstwhile Soviet Union at the hand of Muslim armed with faith and said Pakistanis would find Afghans by their side in case of Indian aggression.

Mojaddedi termed the attack as a clear example of the aggressive and criminal attitude of Indian Government towards innocent people.

Shariatyar while condemning the attack reminded Indians that a 5000-strong tribal lashkar [army] from Afghanistan's Paktia led by his relative Fatehjang had inflicted a heavy defeat on Indian troops and captured Uri and Kotli in 1947. He said 500 Afghan tribesmen from Paktia died in the Kashmir Jehad and many more were willing to follow in their footsteps to teach the Indians a lesson and liberate their Kashmiri brethren.

Rabbani Government Apologizes for Pakistani Embassy Attack

BK3001094896 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 30 Jan 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by Aroosa Alam, M. Ali Imran, and "Monitoring"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan 29 — Competent sources said here on Monday that Pakistan has received an apology from President Rabbani on the burning of the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul last year and the consequent human loss in the incident.

Sources said the apology had come in the wake of hectic diplomatic efforts made by Tehran. Official sources said the apology does not mention the compensation part of Pakistan's written demand. It may be mentioned that on Oct 12 last year, a Foreign Office spokesman had told newsmen in Islamabad that Pakistan had demanded compensation amounting to Rs [rupees] 467.68 million (equivalent to US dollars 14.8 million) as compensation for damage done to its mission in Kabul and official and personal property as well as death compensation for a deceased member of Embassy in an ugly incident of September 6, 1995.

Sources, however, did not term it as a major development towards restoring peace and stability with Kabul in the wake of apology sent to Pakistan by President Rabbani. Sources said there have been a lot of high-level contacts between Islamabad and Tehran during the last eight weeks. These have been major contacts since the emergence of differences of perception between Pakistan and Tehran over mechanism for transfer of power in Kabul. The sources indicated that the two sides had worked in close consultation round the clock to hammer out an acceptable and face-saving device to narrow down the visible differences between Islamabad and Rabbani- led Kabul regime. Senior level Iranian diplomatic sources said though differences between Iran and Pakistan still exist over Afghanistan issue, it is hoped that a viable formula for peace in Afghanistan would be evolved with the active participation of President Rabbani and other political parties of Afghanistan.

Iranian sources said there had been some flexibility towards various proposals being fielded jointly by Iran, Pakistan and United Nations. Competent sources in Islamabad said Islamabad was in no mood to accept merely an apology especially if read with Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's hard-hitting statement. "Frankly speaking the apology has made no difference in the continuing stalemate", sources in the Capital told The Muslim.

Meanwhile unidentified aircraft pounded the Afghan capital Kabul on Monday and the city was hit by gunfire killing at least one person and injuring three.

Officials of the Defence Ministry and witnesses said the aircraft attacked the market and the area surrounding the Defence Ministry. The Defence Ministry blamed the attack on the Taleban who were encamped around the capital for more than four months. The Afghan government had offered a ceasefire at the start of Ramadan but other factions opposed to it had not shown any interest in it.

BBC correspondent said after the air raid there were a number of heavy explosions. Four bombs fell around the Presidential Palace where the Defence Ministry is located. Meanwhile the Hezb-e Eslami, which is opposed to Rabbani government, has said that Kabul Jalalabad highway will be reopened which was closed two weeks ago. A spokesman for the Hezb-e Eslami said in Sarobi that this was being done to ease the shortages of food items in Kabul.

The correspondent said since the blockade of the highway prices of essential food items have gone so high that almost half of the Kabul population was not in a position to meet its needs. The UN has warned that if the highway was not reopened citizens will face starvation.

He said Hezb-e Eslami had now guaranteed safe passage of food items upto the government's front lines. Hezb-e Eslami said it had reached agreement with other groups that trucks carrying food items would not be charged any toll tax and if any group violated this agreement, force would be used against that. Hezb-e Eslami spokesman blamed the traders for price hike but said responsibility squarely lies with the Rabbani government.

Meanwhile, according to reports reaching Peshawar Taleban were said to have started deploying fresh troops to the western city of Maidanshar as well as Chahar Asiab, 20 kilometres south-east of Kabul.

The fresh reinforcements from Kandahar to the front-line in Maidanshar and Chahar Asiab by the student militia was an indication that Kabul was likely to be attacked afresh in near future. Large number of tanks and artillery was said to have been moved from the Taleban headquarters in Kandahar to the above two sectors.

The Taleban's military preparations for a possible major assault on Kabul have been noticed at a time when the Afghan Capital is almost besieged from all sides and the supply of food and other essentials has been completely stopped. The Taleban sources in Peshawar said Rabbani's removal was possible only militarily and not politically as the Afghan President did not believe in a negotiated settlement of the issue.

The Taleban, it is pertinent to add, had recently turned down President Rabbani's offer for observing cease-fire during the holy month of Ramadan and had reiterated their determination to oust the Afghan President by force. Besides, the three party opposition alliance of Coordination Council had also rejected the truce offer of the Afghan government.

According to Afghan sources the allied parties Coordination Council were also in contact with one another and there was a possibility that they could also join the expected showdown between the Taleban and the Afghan government.

Hamayun Jareer, son-in-law of Golboddin Hekmatyar was said to have returned after visiting Mazar-e Sharif, Samangan and Baghlan provinces. In these strategic northern areas, the Hezb leader held meetings with party commanders and Junbish [as published] leaders and discussed the possibility and effects of reopening a military front against the ruling coalition in Kabul.

Pakistani Editorial Welcomes Final Passage of Brown Amendment

BK2901104896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Jan 96 p 14

[Editorial: "Brown Amendment"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Brown Amendment, which was expected to be passed some time ago but was delayed because of the on-going budgetary dispute between the US President and the Congress, has finally become law as part of the Foreign Appropriations Act, allowing the US government to deliver military equipment worth 368 million dollars to Pakistan. Pakistan had paid for this equipment as far back as 1990 but it was held up in the US because of a unique piece of legislation, the Pressler Amendment, which ostensibly stemmed from a concern for nuclear proliferation but being "Pakistan-specific", it singled out this country for discriminatory treatment, and in contravention of all rules of fair business stopped the shipment of even those military supplies for which US companies already had taken money.

In fact, principle of fairness that Senator Hank Brown has sought to establish in the case of these supplies, does not apply to another already paid-for deal, that of the deliver of F-16s. As it is, not only the planes are to be held back from Pakistan but the proposed arrangement, under which the planes would be sold to a third party and the money thus collected returned to us, is being projected as a big concession to this country. In other words, taking the money and refusing to deliver the sold merchandise could also he a perfectly legitimate business practice.

In view of the unfairness of the whole situation and the fact that the Brown Amendment is only a one-time waiver to the unjust Pressler Amendment, our government's claims of a great victory may not look all that great. But it is also true that had the government not worked hard on the project, lobbying with the right quarters, etc., the equipment would still be stuck in some US warehouses collecting dust, and we would neither have the money nor the merchandise. It is also a matter of satisfaction that the new law provides for the US President to reprogramme any existing funds to reimburse the Pakistani government for the storage costs it has been paying.

Perhaps one of the most positive aspects of the new law is the provision that allows for US companies to receive loan guarantees and insurance from the Overseas Private investment Corporation. This should provide the much needed confidence to various American business leaders who during recent years had signed MoUs [memorandums of understanding] for starting new business ventures in Pakistan but have been wary of actually making their investments. In fact, though the Brown Amendment may not be such a big victory for Pakistan in terms of removing all the unfair restrictions slammed on it by the Pressler law, it may lead to newer and productive possibilities of cooperation between the two countries.

Pakistani Government Said Ready for Unconditional Talks With MQM

BK3001124196 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 30 Jan 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Law Minister Prof ND Khan said Monday that the government was keen to resume dialogue with the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement], but denied that the desire to do so had any thing to do with pressure from the United States or any other quarter.

"We are not confused or panicky on this count," he told a group of reporters in his parliament chambers.

"Clearly, there are two parties the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] and the Altaf Group, and the issue is localised — confined to one city, Karachi."

The law minister, who heads the official negotiating team, said the government had not taken steps to restart parleys with the MQM or improve the Karachi situation under pressure from any country or quarter.

He asked Altaf Hussain to condemn India for test-firing Prithvi and the rocket attack on Forward Kahuta, in which over 20 innocent persons were killed and several others injured.

ND Khan said that before leaving for Karachi three days ago, he had deliberately issued a statement that he was going there to make efforts for the resumption of talks, and expressed optimism in this connection.

"But the other side stated that negotiations could not be started in the prevailing circumstances," he pointed out, and reminded the MQM that the situation was presently much better as compared to that of July 11 last year when the talks were initiated.

The law minister said that at that time terrorism and the casualty rate had been very high compared to the present situation. "I would like to know the logic behind not resuming the talks now when the situation is considerably improved."

He surmised that Nawaz Sharif's agreement with Altaf Hussaisn could be the reason behind this attitude as they had planned to start their movement against the government after Eid.

ND Khan said at a time when India had become very aggressive and had attacked Forward Kahuta with rockets, it was the duty of all parties including the PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] and MQM to join hands for national solidarity. "Nawaz Sharif should make Altaf Hussain understand the importance of talks now."

Before going to Karachi, he said, he had expected that "neutral respected citizens would further build up their mutual contacts for the resumption of the talks.

We are prepared for unconditional dialogue, to resume the talks from where they had broke down, and are willing to consider what the Altaf Group calls unfulfilled promises and commitments and review the 'hardship cases.' We are prepared to see what the government can do in this connection, he said.

The law minister said that during the negotiations, MQM's allegations of custodial killings could also be talked about and steps could be taken to remove their grievances Despite the fact that our party is and has always been in a position to win two- thirds majority in Sindh, we are insisting on talks only for the prime purpose of restoration of peace in Karachi."

ND Khan said if violence was stopped, the issue would not remain complicated. "Ultimately we can be come power sharers in Sindh, but it is subject to the return of peace."

He said that the weakness of the process of negotiations forced the government to take administrative measures. "We have taken all possible steps for restoration of peace as we have already stressed during the negotiations that peace is our main priority."

No Change in MQM Stand on Talks With Pakistani Government

BK2701102796 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 27 Jan 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by THE MUSLIM bureau in Karachi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Jan 26 — The Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) held on to its earlier stand that talks with government can resume only on the fulfillment of promises made to it.

"The government must implement the 10-point accord it had reached with us in October 1994, reply to our letter written in September, and honour the commitments it had made to MQM during negotiations held between July and September last year, " said the MQM chief negotiator Ajmal Dehlvi.

His comments came in response to a statement from Law Minister N D Khan who, in his capacity as the leader of the government negotiating team, had offered to resume the parleys with MQM.

Talks, held last year, were broken abruptly in September after the Muhajir Qaumi Movement accused the government of indifference and a "put-up show."

The government has never been sincere in resolving the Karachi issue, MQM said, and thought that it had held nine rounds of talks for the sake of convenience only.

It now says that the government will have to honour all its commitments before asking the MQM to pick up the thread of negotiations from where it was broken.

"I have also read in newspaper that the Law Minister had planned a visit to Karachi to contact me and convince me to resume these negotiations. Our position is very clear. There is no ambiguity about it. We want that pledges made to us and the agreements arrived at, should first be met", Dehlvi said in answer to questions from this correspondent.

Expectations had heightened meanwhile that a meeting between Dehlvi and N D Khan would take place by Saturday but whether that would also help break the ice, was hard to predict.

Meanwhile an activist of Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) Faheem Bhoora died in custody under mysterious circumstances on early Friday morning.

Police said the Mehmoodabad cops brought the handcuffed Faheem Bhoora to dig out an arms cache in a Manzoor Colony building. Two Kalashnikovs were recovered from the first floor of the building. The police claimed the accused dashed the cop guarding him and jumped down from the second floor of the building, with his head down. He died on the spot.

Faheem Bhoora was arrested last week from the Old City area and was remanded to police. The police claimed the accused had admitted several cases of terrorism and killings.

It may be recalled the MQM leadership had feared that Faheemuz Zaman alias Bhoora would also be killed in a fake encounter.

It had also sent telegrams regarding their fears to the highups in Islamabad and Karachi.

On the other hand some reports said the clothes said the deceased were blood-stained when the Edhi volunteers shifted his body from a police mobile to the ambulance.

Meanwhile, two more persons, including an MQM activist were killed in a firing incident and an alleged encounter in the city.

Police said MQM activist Ansar was-killed when he and his other group members fired upon a police party in Gulbahar late Thursday night. Some weapons were recovered from his possession.

Another killing was reported from Malir City area.

Meanwhile, two more persons were killed in a battle between two armed groups in Khokhrapar, Malir. The locals fear the fight may take an ethnic turn if proper security arrangement are not made in the suburban locality.

Reports reaching from the Khokhrapar said two persons identified as Akbar Hussain and Abid Hussain were killed while five more people sustained bullet wounds in a renewed encounter between the armed supporters of MQM(H)[Haqiqi] and Jeay Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party. The deceased's political affiliation could not be known.

The authorities, on the other hand, had sent reinforcements to the affected locality, where the residents say, firing was still being heard till the filing of this report.

Pakistani Article Says Islam 'Central Focus' of U.S. Foreign Policy

BK2901131696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Jan 96 p 7

[Article by Sarmad F. Hussain: "Islam and the U.S."]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After the ending of the cold war the United States of America lost its ideological enemy which had kept its foreign policy going in one direction for nearly half a century. The gap left by the disappearance of the Soviet Union was filled by conjuring up another enemy, viz. that of Islamic fundamentalism. More books and research articles have been written in the United States in particular and in the West in general on the impending clash between the world's two civilizations in the recent years than ever before. But this perception of Islamic militant groups being the gravest threat to US security interests all over the world has not been accompanied by an in-depth understanding of Islam itself. Most of these perceptions have been wedded to the West's ignorance about both the Muslims and their faith.

However, as the Islamic groups, countries and the religion are becoming a central focus of the US foreign policy, there is realization in the country that there has to be a more objective way to look at this self-defined enemy than through the prism of hardened stereotypes that may not have any factual basis. To understand Islam and the Muslims is, therefore, the new political and geostrategic compulsion to which the American decision makers and the public alike are waking up to.

The most frank admission of the lack of knowledge about Islam and the Muslims came from the US First Lady, Hillary Clinton, who visited South Asia last year. On her return home, while speaking at the Department of State, she delivered a Speech in which she explained her experience of Pakistan and also underlined the absence of a specific, objective framework to understand the precepts and the fundamentals of Islam.

She said while showing a slide to the audience: "This is a picture of our visit to the large mosque in the capital of Pakistan and I put it there because we are about to visit countries where Islam is a major influence or, as in the case of Pakistan, the primary religion because Pakistan is an Islamic state. We in our country do not know much about Islam. We, like so many of the other issues we confront on our television sets, draw our conclusions often not from personal experience or even study but from images we see. And I think it is very important that we know here in our own country that the number of Americans who are Muslims is growing and that throughout the world, it is essential that we learn more about Islam and respect Islamic traditions as we work together with people who are themselves followers of the same tradition."

This speech and its impassioned appeal to the Americans to educate themselves about Islam struck the right chord. Later, there was a review of polls taken since 1993 on American attitudes towards Islam and the Middle East. Interestingly, it supported the assertions made by Hillary Clinton and also revealed some other fascinating aspects of US relations with the Islamic world.

To quote a few examples from the review of the polls, according to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations survey conducted some time back by Gallup: "Islamic fundamentalism was not ranked among the most serious threats facing the US. The most critical threats were nuclear weapons proliferation (72 per cent), large scale immigration (72 per cent) and international terrorism (69 per cent)."

Other findings of the surveys were also interesting. To the questions about Islam and Muslims, the predominant response of the American public was "no opinion". The proportion of the Americans giving this response ranged between 40-60 per cent. Even after the World Trade Center bombing, a poll conducted by the American Muslim Council found 41 per cent of Americans had no opinion of Islam while another 26 per cent had a favourable opinion.

According to a statistical expert: "The fact that between 25 per cent to 30 per cent of the respondents to all questions about Muslims replied that they were neither not sure or had no opinions indicates that Americans are becoming increasingly sophisticated and somewhat more sensitive about attitudes towards Muslims."

Even more important than this are the findings of a Los Angeles Times newspaper poll, which says that few Americans equated Islam with terrorism. When Americans were asked, "What comes to your mind about the religion called Islam," only 6 per cent replied violence/terrorism and 25 per cent mentioned the Middle East or Arab countries. The American Muslim Council found in the immediate wake of the World Trade Center bombing that twice as many Americans agreed with the statement that the vast majority of Muslims hate terrorism. Almost 50 per cent of those asked said they did not know enough about Islam to answer.

These statistics and polls may suggest that there is a wholesale change in the way the Americans look at Islam and the Muslims. This may be as untrue as the suggestion that the Americans are absolutely unwilling to learn about Islam and are driven solely by what Hillary Clinton called the images they get from TV. There is definitely some awakening among the Americans about the world that exists beyond their borders, where people even in today's age of super computers and robots hold on to the rope of their faith, pray and are willing to die for the God they worship.

This is a small mercy and it is certainly better than having a totally ignorant public supporting a totally ignorant policy of their rulers. But the crucial difference will come when these changes in the view of the American public of the Muslims and Islam will begin to reflect in their country's foreign policy as well. The heartening developments at the public level do not hide the dismaying fact that the US foreign policy is still caught in the myth of Islam being the threat to its interests. This is evident from the fact that of the countries that are labelled as terrorists, an overwhelming number are Muslims. The US still sees Iran to be a rogue state and is trying to prepare a diplomatic noose around its neck. It still condemns Iraq though, fortunately, it draws a distinction between the Iraqi leaders and the Iraqi people. It feels threatened by small states like Libya and Sudan and has massive reservations about Islamic re-awakening in Algeria. It is fighting an undeclared war against a host of Islamic militant groups all across the Middle East. It is these policies that have to be changed to bridge the gap between the Muslims and the US.

Sri Lanka

'Hundreds' Dead, Injured in Suicide Bomb Attack in Sri Lanka

BK3101092596 Hong Kong AFP in English
0859 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, 31 Jan (AFP) — Hundreds of people were killed or wounded in the suicide bomb attack in central Colombo Wednesday [31 January], and hundreds more were trapped in office buildings set ablaze by the explosion, witnesses said.

Hundreds of wounded were packed into buses and taken to hospital, eyewitness accounts said. One witness said he saw about 20 bodies in front of the Central Bank building alone.

The government issued an urgent appeal for blood and urged doctors who were on leave to return to work immediately.

Foreign tourists were believed to be among those wounded. Guests at two nearby hotels were injured by flying glass shrapnel, officials said.

More than a dozen buildings were in a shambles with their windows blown out and their ceilings collapsed.

Some had caught fire, trapping hundreds of office workers on upper floors.

Witnesses said gunmen first opened fire on guards at the Central Bank and then drove a explosives-laden truck through a steel barrier at the entrance to the skyscraper before detonating the charge.

More on Death Toll, Injuries in Suicide Bombing in Sri Lanka

BK3101113296 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English
1045 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Many people have been injured and many are reported to be dead as a result of a powerful bomb explosion which occurred near the Lanka Central Bank Building in Colombo, Fort, this morning. Before the explosion, a group, firing, had attempted to enter the Central Bank Building. Witnesses said the security officers too fired. Later, two bombs exploded while another powerful one which was in a parked vehicle exploded. The injured have been admitted to the Colombo General Hospital. The number of dead it still unknown. Hospital sources point out that the condition of about 100 persons is serious. The hospital staff is fully engaged in treating the injured while our reporters say that the health minister A.H.M. Fowzie was directing the necessary arrangements. Meanwhile, ambulances, doctors and assistants are required at the site of the explosion at the Sri Lanka central bank. A request has been made to all the hospital staff to report to their places of duties immediately. Employees of the water supply and drainage board have been requested to arrive at the site to make immediate repairs.

Arrangements have been made to evacuate the people from the central bank, the Ceylinco Building and other buildings in the vicinity. Our reporters say that cranes and other heavy equipment have been used for this purpose. The fire brigade has also deployed its staff to douse the fire. Helicopters are also assisting in this task. The director of the general hospital says that blood is required for the injured and has required donors to come immediately to the hospital. People are requested to remain calm and not to visit the site of the incident.

Sri Lankan President Receives PRC Investors, Stresses Ties

BK2701131396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga has said that the government follows a policy of promoting investment from abroad, especially from friendly countries. Speaking to a Chinese delegation, which called on her yesterday at Temple Trees [official residence], the president stressed the need to strengthen the broader relations in the region. Economic and trade relations that existed in the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] region should be expanded to encompass more countries in the Asian region.

President Kumaratunga recalled the economic and broad ties between China and Sri Lanka. She said that under previous governments of her late father and Mrs. Bandaranaike, it was possible to strengthen relations between the two countries, especially in the trade and political spheres. The president also said that she hoped to visit China in the first half of this year and added that this would be an opportunity to further expand the existing relations between the people of both countries.

The Chinese delegation, comprising prospective investors from Hunan Province, is headed by deputy governor of the province Zhou Shichang. The delegation is at present exploring the possibility of starting joint venture projects in the island. The head of the delegation informed the president that they were interested in launching joint venture projects in the Southern Province and told her that the visiting members already had discussions with the Southern Province Development Task Force. The delegation has already met several key ministers and local investors and is happy with the incentives offer to the investors.

Buddhist Organization Urges Just Political Settlement in Sri Lanka

BK2601124796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The All-Ceylon Buddhist Bhikku [monk] Organization has approved a resolution calling for a just political settlement to the ethnic problem. The resolution stressed, however, that such a solution should also protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. The association adopted this motion at the BMICH [Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall] in Colombo today. Around 1,000 members of the Sangha [Buddhist clergy] from various parts of the island were present. Proposing the motion, the chief Sangha Nayaka of the Northwestern Province, Venerable Mawatagama Wilanandathero called for a solution which should create a nation in which all citizens could live without fear and discrimination. The resolution was seconded by the Sangha Nayaka of the Pollonaruwa Disava, the Venerable Kumukhyadevala Sridiranandathero.

Addressing the meeting, President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that her government has accepted that Sri Lanka was facing a serious ethnic problem. She dismissed suggestions in certain academic circles that the country had a terrorist problem rather than an ethnic one. The president stressed that recognizing the nature of the crisis is an important step toward resolving it.

Army, LTTE Offensives Around Batticaloa Detailed

BK3001122696 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sri Lankan troops are carrying out shelling and aerial attacks on Batticaloa and the jungle areas along Batticaloa-Polonnarua border. At certain places, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] have launched attacks on the troops advancing along land routes. There are no reports of any damage. A large number of trees have been damaged in the indiscriminate bombing in jungle areas.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan troops indulged in sniper attacks on civilians who went to transport timber in the Toppigala jungle areas. Five of the six civilians who went to transport timber avoided being shot by the troops. Sivasambhu Dharmalingam from Pattipola, who is the father of four children, is missing. Veluppillai Padmanabhan, aged 21 years, from Kokkadichcholai escaped with gunshot wounds. Following the LTTE attack in

Manal Aru early in the morning of 22 January, the Sinhalese settled near Parakramapura military camp are leaving that place and returning to their native places. Meanwhile, reports from the locality say that troop reinforcements have been rushed to that area and that the Sri Lankan troops are engaged in preventing the exodus of the Sinhalese. The emigrating Sinhalese told the military officer who tried to stop them that they do not have faith in troops who cannot protect themselves.

The roof of the Codlic [name as transliterated] College laboratory in Point Pedro was damaged in the missile attack launched from Palali military camp toward Vadamarachchi at about 2200 on 22 January. Another missile exploded near the store house of the International Committee of the Red Cross, located adjacent to the college. The store house had a narrow escape. It is to be noted that the Codlic college laboratory was badly damaged in the attacks carried out by the Sri Lankan Navy last year.

An 82-year old woman, Thangamma Paranjothi, was killed in the missile attacks carried out by Sri Lankan troops the day before yesterday. This woman is reported to have died of shock when a missile landed near her and exploded.

Heavy, continuous shelling is being carried out from Palali military camp toward Vadamarachchi. Meanwhile, fishermen from Vadamarachchi have not ventured out to sea in the past two days for fear that the Air Force and Navy could launch offensives in retaliation for the downing of the military helicopter.

Efforts to dispatch the equipment donated by the International Monetary Fund [IMF] to northern schools has been preempted by the Sri Lankan Government. As a result of the war in the north, schools have lost their educational equipment and are experiencing severe shortages of essential supplies. Taking this situation into consideration, the IMF donated equipment worth 4 million rupees, which has been blocked by the Sri Lankan Government for no reason.

In her interview to a Jaffna magazine, a female fighter, Ravindran Sinduja, from Jaffna, who recently joined the LTTE organization, said: I do not want to sacrifice my motherland, as I lost my mother. Saying that her brother was killed in 1987 during a military offensive and her mother was chopped to death on the high seas off the coast of Kilali by the Sri Lankan Navy in 1993, she added that it is essential for her to fight to protect her family from such devastation. She further said: when we satisfactorily fulfill our responsibility toward our land, our nation will be liberated and devastation will be averted.

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thank you.

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